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THE GURNEYS OF EARLHAM





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Goultint

*Edward and Priscilla Wakefield and Catherine Bell.*

*after Gainsborough.*

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THE  
GURNEYS OF EARLHAM

BY

AUGUSTUS J. C. HARE

AUTHOR OF

"MEMORIALS OF A QUIET LIFE," "THE STORY OF TWO NOBLE LIVES,"  
ETC.

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## P R E F A C E

THE Gurneys of Earlham were a Quaker family, who—through their personal qualities and their self-devotion—played a more conspicuous part than any other set of brothers and sisters in the religious and philanthropic life of England during the first half of the nineteenth century. The story of several members of the family has been often told before. The public are already more or less familiar with the names of Samuel Gurney, Joseph John Gurney, Elizabeth Fry, and their brother-in-law Thomas Fowell Buxton; but of the united family no record or memorial has been given, telling the degree in which the wonderful harmony and unity, which no difference of mere opinion could dim or alter, influenced all their thoughts and stimulated all their actions; showing the way in which—living and working for others—they “were of one heart and of one soul, neither said any of them that aught of

the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common."

The correspondence of each of the brothers and sisters has been preserved, with the immense mass of journals which tell the detail of their daily life, especially of their spiritual life. Amid such mountains of material, the editor has endeavoured to select such passages as deal rather with facts than thoughts, such as give most insight into the personal characteristics of the writers, or their loving labours for God and man.

AUGUSTUS J. C. HARE.

"O may I join the choir invisible  
Of those immortal dead who live again,  
In minds made better by their presence, live  
In pulses stirred to generosity,  
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn  
For miserable aims that end with self,  
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,  
And with their vast persistence urge men's search  
To vaster issues.

So to live is heaven :  
To make undying music in the world."

—GEORGE ELIOT.

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THE GURNEYS OF EARLHAM

VOL. I.

A

NAME	BORN	BIRTHPLACE	MARRIED
JOHN GURNEY . . .	Nov. 10, 1749	—	—
CATHERINE BELL . .	—	—	—
<i>Their Children—</i>			
1. CATHERINE . . .	March 28, 1776	Magdalen St., Norwich	—
2. JOHN . . . . .	Oct. 28, 1777	do.	—
3. RACHEL . . . . .	Nov. 21, 1778	do.	—
4. ELIZABETH . . .	May 21, 1780	do.	Joseph Fry
5. JOHN (second of the name) . . .	June 17, 1781	do.	Elizabeth Gurney, s.p.
6. RICHENDA . . .	Aug. 5, 1782	do.	Rev. Francis Cunn- ham, s.p.
7. HANNAH . . . .	Sept. 15, 1783	Bramerton, Norfolk	Sir Thomas Fowell Bux- ton, Bart.
8. LOUISA . . . . .	Sept. 26, 1784	Magdalen St., Norwich	Samuel Hoare, the III.
9. PRISCILLA . . .	Nov. 27, 1785	do.	—
10. SAMUEL . . . .	Oct. 26, 1786	Earlham Hall	Elizabeth Sheppard
11. JOSEPH JOHN . .	Aug. 2, 1788	do.	{ 1. Jane Birkbeck 2. Mary Fowler, s.p. 3. Eliza Paul Kirk- bride, s.p.
12. DANIEL . . . . .	March 9, 1791	do.	Lady Harriet Jemima Hay

DATE	PLACE OF MARRIAGE	DATE OF DEATH	BURIED AT	AGED
May 26, 1775	Tottenham	Oct. 28, 1809	Gildencroft, Nor- wich	60
—	—	Nov. 17, 1792	Gildencroft, Nor- wich	38
—	—	June 26, 1850	Lowestoft, Suf- folk	75
—	—	May 24, 1778	Gildencroft, Nor- wich	1
—	—	Sept. 17, 1827	Gildencroft, Nor- wich	50
Aug. 12, 1800	Meeting-house, Nor- wich	Oct. 12, 1845	Barking, Essex	66
Jan. 6, 1807	Northrepps Church, Norfolk	Aug. 9, 1814	Gildencroft, Nor- wich	34
Jan. — 1816	Earlham Church, Nor- folk	Aug. 12, 1855	Lowestoft, Suf- folk	73
May 13, 1807	Tasborough Meeting- house, Norfolk	March 20, 1872	Overstrand, Nor- folk	89
Dec. 24, 1806	Earlham Church, Nor- folk	Aug. 1836	Hendon, Middle- sex	53
—	—	March 25, 1821	Gildencroft, Nor- wich	36
April 7, 1808	Barking Meeting- house, Essex	June 5, 1856	Barking, Essex	70
Sept. 10, 1817	Wells, Norfolk	Jan. 4, 1847	Gildencroft, Nor- wich	59
July 18, 1827	Melksham, Wiltshire			
Oct. 21, 1841	Darlington, Durham			
Dec. 12, 1822	Lyndhurst, New Forest	June 16, 1880	Runcton, Nor- folk	90



# I

## THE HOME OF EARLHAM

“Sweete home, where meane estate  
In safe assurance, without strife or hate,  
Findes all things needfull for contentment meeke.”

—SPENSER.

AFTER leaving the hollow where the beautiful crochettèd spire of Norwich Cathedral and the square mass of its castle rise above the dingy red roofs and blue smoke of the town, the road to Lynn ascends what, generally called an incline, is in Norfolk a long hill. After passing its brow, at about three miles from the city, the horizon is fringed by the woods—grey in winter, radiant with many tints in summer—which belong to Earlham. This delightful old place has for centuries been the property of the Bacon family, and they have never consented to sell it; but since 1786 it has been rented by the Gurneys, a period of a hundred and nine years—perhaps one of the oldest tenancies known for a mansion of the size, though very frequent in the case of

farmhouses. Thus, to the Gurney family, it has become the beloved home of five generations; to them, its old chambers are filled with the very odour of holiness; its ancient gardens and green glades and sparkling river bring thoughts of domestic peace and happiness, which cannot be given in words; its very name is a refrain of family unity and love.

The little park of Earlham is scarcely more than a paddock, with its fine groups of trees and remains of avenues, in one of which a Bacon of old time is still supposed to wander, with the hatchet in his hand which he was using on the day of his death. Where the trees thicken beyond the green slopes, above an oval drive familiarly called "the World," stands the house, white-washed towards the road by the colour-hating Quaker second wife of Joseph John Gurney, but infinitely beautiful towards the garden in the pink hues of its brick with grey stone ornaments, and the masses of vine and rose which festoon its two large projecting bow windows and white central porch. Hence the wide lawn, to which the place owes its chief dignity, spreads away on either side to belts of pine-trees, fringed by terraces, where masses of snowdrops and aconites gleam amongst the mossy grass in



early spring. The west side of the house is perhaps the oldest part, and bears a date of James First's time on its two narrow gables. Hence the river is seen gleaming and glancing in the hollow, where it is crossed by the single arch of a bridge. From the low hall, with its old-fashioned furniture and pictures, a very short staircase leads to an anteroom opening upon the drawing-room, where Richmond's striking full-length portrait of Mrs. Fry now occupies a prominent place amongst the likenesses of her brothers and sisters. Another staircase leads to what was the sitting-room of the seven Gurney sisters of the beginning of the nineteenth century, with an old Bacon portrait let into the panelling over the fireplace. The dining-room is downstairs, and was the latest addition to the house, a handsome, long, and lofty room, built by Mr. Edward Bacon, long M.P. for Norwich, that he might entertain his constituents. Close by is the humble little study occupied by the father of the numerous Gurney family of three generations ago. But the pleasantest room at Earlham is "Mrs. Catherine's chamber," always occupied by the eldest daughter, mother and sister in one, and in which in her old age, with her beautiful intonation and

delicate sense of fitting emphasis, she would assemble the young Norwich clergy to teach them how the Scriptures should be read in church.

The Norfolk Gurneys claim descent from the ancient barons of Gournay in Normandy, where



S. HILDEVERT, GOURNAY.

the curious *Porte Ibert*, with many old towers of the walls, and the twelfth-century church of S. Hildevert, attest the wealth and power of its ancient lords. Several members of the house accompanied Duke William to England, and fought at the battle of Hastings; after which

the valour of the aged Hugh de Gournay III. was rewarded by the English barony of Gournay (held by tenure of military service), and by large grants of land, so that he has left his name to Barrow-Gurney in Somerset, and several other places in England. The story of the "House of Gournay" is told in a magnificent history by Daniel Gurney of Runc-ton, which possesses historic interest and shows much antiquarian research.

Yet the real—the human—interest of the history of the Gurney family begins, not with its prosperity, but with its decadence, when, after its members had fallen to the rank of Norwich tradesmen and tavern-keepers, it held a front rank in the battalions of those who were willing to undergo all things for the faith of Christ, and after which, by their strict integrity and shrewd application to business, ever mingled with the noblest generosity and beneficence, they rose to highest eminence amongst the merchant-princes of England.

It is especially as the leading Quaker family of England that the Gurneys of Earlham have become celebrated. The Quakers, or "the Society of Friends," as they are more properly called, are guided, as to their religious life, by rules drawn up about 1648 by George

Fox, who, born in very humble life at Drayton in Leicestershire, and apprenticed to a shoemaker and grazier, had thought them out while keeping his master's sheep. Eventually he left his occupations to become an itinerant preacher, "holding forth," without invitation, wherever he went, and rebuking whatever of evil he came in contact with, though frequently imprisoned for so doing. Amongst his many disciples was John Gurney, citizen and cordwainer, living in the parish of S. Gregory in Norwich, who, in 1683, having openly joined the "Society of Friends," was committed for three years to the city gaol, with fifteen others of his sect, the sole ground of their imprisonment being a refusal to take the oath of allegiance, which they declined doing simply from religious scruple as to taking any oath whatever. In April 1685 they petitioned the representatives of the city and county to make intercession in their behalf, "that their heavy burden might be taken off, and the oppressed go free;" but in vain; and they were only released in the reign of James II., by whom the severe measures against their Society were relaxed. In the meantime, however, John Gurney's mercantile affairs had been well managed by his capable wife, Elizabeth Swanton of Grundisborough, and when he died in 1721, he was able to leave a



Gouphart

*John Gurney*  
*"The Master, Carpenter and Writer, Manufacturer as Gurney"*





considerable fortune to his four surviving sons. The eldest of these, John Gurney, known as "the weavers' advocate," gained a considerable reputation by the eloquence and clearness with which he pleaded the cause of the woollen manufacturers when examined (1720) before the House of Lords as to the prohibition of the import of calico and cotton manufactures,<sup>1</sup> "telling their Lordships that the case before them was the cries of the poor for bread, and that if they were not relieved by their Lordships, many hundred thousand families must perish." The talents which he displayed on this occasion led to this John Gurney being offered a seat in Parliament by Sir R. Walpole, though he declined it, as incompatible with his religious opinions. Horace Walpole frequently stayed at his house at Norwich. His woollen manufacture was subsequently turned into a banking business, which became the origin of the present Norwich Bank.

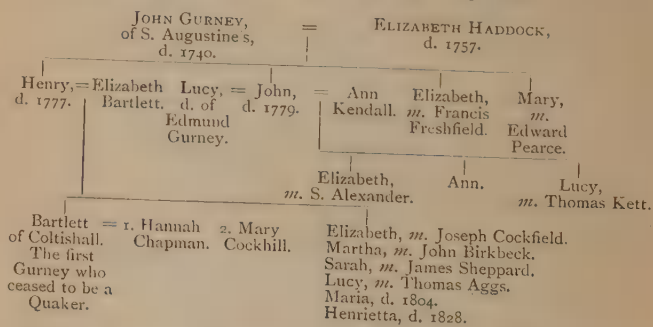
The second son of the John Gurney who suffered for the Quaker faith in Norwich Castle

<sup>1</sup> The engraving of him is inscribed, "The Woollen Manufacturers' Glory. To the immortal praise of John Gurney of Norwich, who by his celebrated extempore speeches, Feb. 1720, before ye Honourable House of Commons, turned the scale of the contention between the woollen and linen manufacturers." Round the portrait is "Concedat Laurea Linguae," and below some doggerel lines on "the Norwich Quaker."

was Joseph,<sup>1</sup> also a Norwich merchant, who was early established by his father in an old house surrounding a courtyard at the back of Magdalen Street. Prospering in business, in 1747 he purchased from Mr. Stackhouse Tompson the estate of Keswick, near Norwich, and founded the Keswick branch of the house of Gurney.<sup>2</sup> In 1713 he had married the beautiful Hannah, daughter of Joshua Middleton, a "Friend" of Darlington, which has always been the stronghold of Quakerism. By this

<sup>1</sup> For an interesting account of him see the "Testimonies of the Society of Friends."

<sup>2</sup> As many of them are mentioned again, it is well to give the descendants of the eldest son of John Gurney, the prisoner.



Of the daughters of Henry Gurney, Mrs. Sheppard and Mrs. Aggs lived to a great age. Mrs. Birkbeck, who had married a banker at Lynn, continued, as his widow, to live at the bank-house, and had also a villa at Hunstanton: she was a strict Quaker, of great piety and benevolence. One of the unmarried daughters, Henrietta—"Miss Gurney"—was especially active in the Norwich charities.



sculptured

*Joseph Gurney.*  
*of Norwich*



lady, known as "the fair Quakeress,"<sup>1</sup> he was the father of ten children, of whom four lived to grow up—John, Samuel, Joseph, and Hannah.

The eldest son, John,<sup>2</sup> who succeeded his father at Keswick and in the house in Magdalen Street, added greatly to the worldly prosperity of the family by the introduction into Norwich of the manufacture of hand-spun yarn from the South of Ireland, and left a fortune of £100,000. In all his mercantile ventures he was aided by his brother Samuel,<sup>3</sup> to whom he

<sup>1</sup> The engraved portrait of Hannah Middleton has the following lines:—

"Nor Gold nor Gems are wanting to the maid,  
In neat Simplicity, like this Array'd;  
Plain native Beauty more delights the heart,  
Than all the glittering ornaments of Art."

"The Fair Quaker" is inserted between each pair of lines.

The portrait of her husband has the following lines:—

"Virtue unfeign'd, Simplicity and Truth,  
These are the pride of Age, the Grace of Youth,  
'Tis not the Hat, or Coat, the wise will scan  
What dwells within, this recommends the Man."

"A Quaker" is inserted between each pair of lines.

<sup>2</sup> This John Gurney was a very strict Quaker, and his journals of religious reflection still exist—of the same introspective kind as that which were so popular with his grandchildren.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel, second son of John Gurney of Keswick, was lame from his birth. In the sixteen summer-houses which adorned the grounds at Keswick, there was always a vacant place left in the seat, where the chair in which he was wheeled about could be placed. He died in 1770. His wife was Sarah Lawrence of Woodbridge, and by her he had two daughters. The elder, Sarah, married Samuel Hoare, a banker; the younger, Hannah, married Thomas Kett of Seething. Samuel Gurney's widow married Thomas Bland of Norwich, by whom she had an only son, Michael.

was greatly attached, and for whose use he added a wing to the paternal house of Keswick, a charming place, with delightful woods above the river, in which, at that time, there was a heronry as well as a rookery. He married, c. 1739, Elizabeth, daughter of Richard Kett of Norwich, by whom he had twelve children, of whom four grew up—Richard, John, Joseph, and Rachel.

The second son, John, was born in 1750. As a boy he had bright red hair, and it is amusingly recorded that one day in the streets of Norwich a number of boys followed him, pointing to his red locks and saying, "Look at that boy; he's got a bonfire on the top of his head," and that John Gurney was so disgusted that he went to a barber's, had his head shaved, and went home in a wig. He grew up, however, a remarkably attractive-looking young man. In May 1773 he was married at Tottenham to Catherine, younger daughter of Daniel Bell of Stamford Hill, and first cousin of his sister-in-law, Mrs. Gurney of Keswick.<sup>1</sup> Her great-grandfather had been Robert Barclay, the famous "Apolo-gist" of the Quakers, who "bore the loss of all

<sup>1</sup> The Memoirs of the Bell Family were written by Jonathan Bell (Mrs. Gurney's youngest brother) in 1851, when in his eighty-second year.



Goussier

*Hammer. Millington.*

*The First Edition*





things" for what he believed to be the truth, and had been content to "eat his bread with scarceness," exchanging a life of honour and luxury for all the horrors which at that time attended a convict's cell. Sewell, in his "History of the Quakers," describes him as "a man of eminent gifts and great endowments, expert not only in the language of the learned, but also well versed in the writings of the ancient Fathers and other ecclesiastical writers, and furnished with a great understanding, being not only of a sound judgment, but also strong in argument." His faithful friend and fellow-sufferer, William Penn, says of him: "We often travelled together, both in this kingdom and in Holland, and some parts of Germany, and were inward in divers services from first to last; and the apprehension I had of him was this, he loved the truth and the way of God, as revealed among us, above all the world, and was not ashamed of it among men, but bold and able in maintaining it, sound in judgment, strong in argument, cheerful in travels and sufferings, of a pleasant disposition, yet solid, plain, and exemplary in his conversation. He was a learned man, a good Christian, an able minister, a dutiful son and a loving husband, a tender and careful father, an easy master, and a good

and kind neighbour and friend." Released under James II., Robert Barclay enjoyed considerable court favour during his later years. He died in 1690 at his mansion of Ury in Kincardineshire, leaving seven children and an immense number of grandchildren, one of whom was the mother of Catherine Bell and her once well-known elder sister Priscilla Wakefield,<sup>1</sup> authoress of volumes innumerable, but best remembered from her delightful children's books.

At the time of her marriage, which was long opposed by the Gurney family on account of her want of fortune, Catherine Bell was a graceful and handsome brunette, and as such she appears, at the age of twenty-one, in a charming picture by Gainsborough,<sup>2</sup> with her sister Priscilla, and her brother-in-law

<sup>1</sup> Priscilla, elder daughter of Daniel Bell, born 1751; married Edward Wakefield of Tottenham, a merchant, in 1771, and died 1832, aged eighty-one. She was well known by her contemporaries as the authoress of "Excursions in North America," "The Traveller in Africa," "Perambulations in London and its Environs," "An Introduction to the Natural History of Insects," "Domestic Recreation," "Leisure Hours," "Juvenile Travellers," "Family Tour." The name of Priscilla, afterwards so frequent in the Gurney family, was derived from Priscilla Wakefield.

<sup>2</sup> The picture, executed by Gainsborough just before the marriage of Catherine Bell (1775), is in the possession (1895) of Mrs. Priscilla Wrightson (great-granddaughter of Priscilla Wakefield), of the Old Hall, Hurworth-on-Tees.

Edward Wakefield. The three are depicted in a garden. Catherine wears a brown gown, an apron of clear muslin, and tan-coloured gloves—a figure full of maidenly charm and sweetness. John Gurney was himself esteemed one of the best-looking young men in Norfolk, and had a wonderfully animated countenance. He was sincerely attached to the Society of Friends, but most liberal to those of different sects and opinions. He only wore the Quaker costume to a certain extent, but he used the “Thee” and “Thou”—“the single language,” as it is called. The young couple are described in an Epithalamium by Joseph Gurney Bevan :—

“Come all ye lads and lasses fair,  
And listen to my ditty,  
I sing a youth beyond compare,  
Who comes from Norwich city.

His name, if right I read my song,  
Is called ‘the handsome Johnny,’  
His parts are far above the throng,  
He’s proper, straight, and bonny.

And Fortune on his birth has smiled,  
For wealth in store has he,  
Though with the gift of wealth alone  
He could not happy be.

The nut-brown maid who caused his smart  
Y’cleped ‘the lovely Kitty,’  
Reigning within his captive heart,  
Has seen the youth with pity.”

At the time of his marriage, and for many years afterwards, the profession of John Gurney of Earlham was that of a wool-stapler and spinner of worsted yarn. It was not till 1803 that he, together with his brothers Richard and Joseph, was admitted as a partner into the Norwich Bank by his cousin, Bartlett Gurney. The Bank, which had been established in 1770 by Henry Gurney of Keswick, was afterwards carried on by his son Bartlett.

During the first years of their married life, John and Catherine Gurney always resided in winter in the old "Court House" in Magdalen Street, already inhabited by two generations of the family, and which still was, as it had always been, a very humble abode, though convenient from its nearness to the woollen yarn factory, which was John Gurney's place of business. It was the birthplace of his six eldest children—Catherine, John (who died in infancy), Rachel, Elizabeth, John (the second of the name), and Richenda. Their summer home was a country cottage at Bramerton, where another daughter, Hannah, was born. The Norwich winters were full of quiet happiness. One wing of the house, which surrounded a quadrangular court, was inhabited by the Gurney grandmother, Elizabeth Kett,

widow of John Gurney of Keswick, a kind, affectionate old lady, with whom lived her youngest son Joseph, always the favourite uncle of the elder Earlham children, to whom he was always especially attached, because he had seen so much of them in their childhood. The old lady (who lived till 1788) needed some one to look after her, as in her charities she was so lavish that she always exceeded her very large income, when her sons had to make up the deficit. Molly Neale, her indulgent housekeeper, was almost as great a favourite with the grandchildren as herself. They always remembered the charm of the two gardens separated by a slight railing, and the comfort of the old-fashioned town-house, to which it was a pleasure to retreat on the approach of winter.

But still more lively and endeared was the remembrance of the summers at Bramerton, where the family life was as simple and rural as the home, opening upon a well-wooded common, with oak and walnut trees, and rough ground covered with fern and abounding in wild-flowers. The garden was full of all kinds of summer fruit, and, with the cherry orchard beyond, was so delightful in its season, that Mrs. Fry used afterwards to say that the idea of Paradise and

that garden were always one in her mind. Beyond the common was the village, where the Gurney children were early taught to make acquaintance with all the inhabitants and visit the poor. Hemlin, the master of the village school, came to teach them writing and cyphering. On the opposite side, the common ended in hills, sloping down to the river Yare, which winds through green meadows, and is navigable between Norwich and Yarmouth, so that large boats, with their tall red or white sails, often give life to the scene.

The retirement of Bramerton was delightful to Mrs. Gurney, who was highly though self-cultivated, and to whom the ordinary society of a country town offered no attraction, though all who had any scientific or literary attractions to offer were cordially welcomed by her. In a written memorandum found after her death she thus spoke of her rule of life: "First, to promote my duty to my Maker; secondly, my duty to my husband and children, relations, servants, and poor neighbours." To her many children her maternal relation was the very happiest possible. She mentions in her journal that in her daily walks with them she made a point of endeavouring to "enjoy each individually." Truly devout in her own heart, she gave them lessons

in the Bible, though without dwelling upon its Gospel doctrines. She belonged, as well as her husband, to the denomination of "Friends," but without any warm espousal of their principles; the "Public Friends," as they are called, ministers who came from time to time to Bramerton, being at that time more objects of fear and dislike than of reverence or love. At Bramerton clerical society was unknown. Mrs. Gurney's intimacies were rather sought amongst the Unitarians, to whom, at this time, all the culture of Norwich was confined. Her most cherished friend and companion was a first cousin of her own, Margaret Lindoc, at that time a professed Unitarian. This Cousin Peggy had an unrivalled power of attracting and attaching the younger members of the family, who were charmed with her overflowing humour and fun, without observing that it was not always restrained from expending itself on very serious subjects. John Gurney himself was a most indulgent father, always wishing to give his children pleasure, full of good natural abilities; and, though he had only received the most commonplace education, quite beneath what is usual in his rank of life, his quickness prevented its being generally noticed, whilst his kindness and sociabilities rendered him ex-

tremely popular. A singular instance of his public integrity recently appeared in the Norfolk papers.

“Though privateering was only abolished after the middle of the nineteenth century by a treaty entered into by the sovereigns of Europe, the term has already almost lost its significance. It is necessary to state, therefore, that a privateer was a ship, belonging to private individuals, which sailed with a license in times of war to seize and plunder the ships of the enemy. Privateering was almost as old as the navy, and was said to have been practised by Edward I. against the Portuguese in 1295, and was general during the war between Spain and the Netherlands in the seventeenth century. When England was at war with France in 1778, privateering was again extensively indulged in by both Powers. The method pursued by speculators for the purpose of carrying on this legalised piracy is explained by an advertisement which appeared in the *Norfolk Chronicle* of November 14, 1778. It commenced by stating that a subscription was being opened for the purpose of fitting out privateers at the port of Yarmouth, and gentlemen who were willing to encourage the scheme were invited to sign the subscription papers, ‘duplicates of which are lying at Messrs. Gurney’s, bankers, &c.’ The shares were fixed at £25 each, and ‘each subscriber to have his money as he thinks proper.’ Not more than two privateers were to be commissioned without the consent of a general meeting of the subscribers; a dividend



was to be made as soon as there was ten per cent. to divide.

“Unfortunately for the promoters of the project, an unlooked-for difficulty was at the outset placed in the way by Mr. John Gurney, the Norwich banker. The members of the syndicate, as we should call it in these days, had apparently overlooked the fact that the ruling spirit of the bank was a Quaker.

“As a man of peace, Mr. Gurney could not, of course, lend the name of his firm to an enterprise of so warlike a character, and he lost no time in issuing a manifesto to that effect. ‘Having observed an advertisement in the Norwich papers,’ he wrote, ‘promoting a subscription for the fitting out of privateers from the port of Yarmouth, and signifying that the duplicate of the subscription paper lies at Messrs. Gurney’s bank, Norwich, I was not a little surprised. But, inquiring the reason of it, I find that my kinsman, with whom I am connected in business, upon its being unexpectedly proposed to him, had inadvertently assented without due consideration. I therefore esteem it incumbent upon me hereby to declare that our firm was inserted without my knowledge and consent; and as it is inconsistent with our religious principles for us to be in any way actively concerned in aiding or assisting towards the promotion of such measures as are of a violent and destructive nature, we request that notice may be taken that we cannot receive subscriptions to such purpose, and we hope our refusal will not be taken amiss by any.’ No more was heard of Norwich or Yarmouth privateers.”

Very interesting is the record which still remains of the rules which Catherine Gurney drew up for the management of her Bramerton household, the education of her children, and the regulation of her own daily life, divided, as it was, between visits to the nurseries and kitchen, and ministrations to the poor.

“The introduction of the children after dinner generally affords my husband and myself an opportunity of the united enjoyment of our domestic comforts. A short afternoon may either be devoted to the company of my dear husband, or to writing letters, reading, or instructing the children alternately, particularly in the knowledge of the Scriptures. Before tea, or immediately after, I should assemble the little ones, to take particular and individual leave of each other, and the remaining hours of the evening may be devoted to the promotion of my husband’s enjoyment, and, if possible, to blend instruction with amusement for the elder children, who are our constant companions till the time of rest. Then, being quiet and uninterrupted with my best friend, let me not be unmindful of the religious duties of life; which consideration may, I hope, lead to that trust in Providence which gives spiritual tranquillity and spiritual support.”

In 1783 we find Catherine Gurney writing to her cousin Priscilla Hannah Gurney :<sup>1</sup>—

<sup>1</sup> Their mothers were sisters, daughters of David Barclay. Priscilla Hannah was also first cousin to John Gurney, their fathers being brothers.

"*Jan.* 18, 1783.—I am glad to find that thy thoughts are sometimes engaged in my affairs, and that my children are more particularly the object of them. . . . I think thou wilt not be pleased to find that I am so poor an economist of time, that I scarcely make any progress in the education of my elder girls, yet I console myself—perhaps improperly—that although we make no rapid advances, I endeavour, and I hope with success, to secure their minds from injury. . . . I can scarcely resist now an inclination to introduce my little ones. Kitty's good propensities by no means fail her, and, I hope, increase. My lively Rachel has an ardent desire to do well, yet cannot always resist a powerful inclination to the contrary. But my dove-like Betsy scarcely ever offends, and is, in every sense of the word, truly engaging. Our charming boy has a violent inclination to be master, but his extraordinary attachment to me gives me a tolerable share of power: which, be assured, I by no means mean to resign. If my sweet Richenda were not so much teased by her eyes, she would be, in my opinion, as lovely an infant as I have ever yet reared. . . ."

In 1786 the death of Mr. Edward Bacon, the owner of Earlham, permitted Mr. Gurney—whose family and fortunes had alike outgrown the Bramerton cottage—to hire the place from its then owner, Mr. Bacon Frank of Campsall in Yorkshire.<sup>1</sup> The eldest of the children was

<sup>1</sup> John Gurney eventually purchased a considerable estate at Earlham, on the opposite side of the road, connected with which was what had

then only ten years old, and as the size and importance of Earlham was quite unlike anything to which they had been accustomed, going thither was a great event in their history.

Mrs. Gurney now found a wider scope for the various domestic cares, in the details of which every Quaker woman delights, and as she was by no means "a plain Quaker,"—one who puts aside all worldly enjoyments, especially drawing, music, and dancing, as filled with temptations,—she saw much more of society than hitherto, not limiting her acquaintance to members of the Society of Friends, but making cultivated or pleasant Unitarians, Roman Catholics, or Churchmen, equally welcome. Her uncle, Mr. Lindoc, with his clever and agreeable sons, was constantly at the house. He used to read with and teach the children; though, while nominally a Friend, and once celebrated as a preacher, he had quite given it up, and was generally considered very lax as to his faith. Dr. Alderson and his handsome daughter, afterwards Mrs. Opie, were also

been a cell to Caron Abbey, then divided into a large farmhouse, and a comfortable dwelling called the parsonage, from being usually the residence of the curate of Earlham, the church being close by. This estate, including Lower Earlham, is still in the possession of John Gurney's descendants, who may therefore be designated the Gurneys of Earlham.

among the intimate friends of the family, though they took religious life very easily at this time. There were many who remonstrated, thinking such intimacies filled with danger for the younger members of the household. But it was always a fixed rule with Mrs. Gurney to leave her children to judge for themselves as to the special line of their Christian path, while inculcating on them the opinions of no man or sect whatever, but simply the divine truths as set forth in the New Testament. She urged prayer upon them, but at the same time advised them never to attempt to pray unless they felt that they could give their undivided minds to Him who delighted to bless them, and she implored them never to dwell upon trifles in prayer, in which—being immediately before Him—she considered that they should be able to raise to Him their undivided heart and soul in loving adoration.

In the rules for education which she drew up she says :—

“As it appears to be our reasonable duty to improve our faculties, and by that means to render ourselves useful, it is necessary and very agreeable to be well informed of our own language ; of Latin also, as being the most permanent ; and of French, as most in general request. The simple beauties of mathematics appear

to be so excellent an exercise to the understanding, that they ought on no account to be omitted, and are perhaps scarcely less essential than a competent knowledge of ancient and modern history, geography, and chronology. To these may be added a knowledge of the most approved branches of natural history, and a capacity for drawing from nature, in order to promote that knowledge and facilitate the pursuit of it. As a great portion of a woman's life ought to be passed in at least regulating the subordinate affairs of a family, she should work plain work neatly herself, and understand the cutting-out of linen ; also, she should not be ignorant of the common proprieties of a table, or deficient in the economy of any of the most minute affairs of a family. It should be here observed that gentleness of manner is indispensably necessary in women, to say nothing of that polished behaviour which adds a charm to every qualification ; and to both of these it appears certain that children may be led, without vanity or affectation, by amiable and judicious instruction."

At once, in their new home of Earlham, the Gurneys became surrounded, as all Gurneys have been since, by troops of near relations, with whom they lived on terms of the utmost fellowship and intimacy, and who dropped in daily at the family dinner-hour of three, four, and eventually five o'clock. To say nothing of numberless others connected with them by ties of blood and connec-

tion, Mr. Gurney's eldest brother, Richard—"Uncle Gurney"—a country squire of the old-fashioned type, very fond of sport of all kinds, was then living in the old family house of Keswick<sup>1</sup> with his second wife, Rachel Hanbury—the universally beloved "Aunt Gurney"—her children, Richard (afterwards of Thickthorn), Elizabeth, and Anna, and Hudson and Agatha,<sup>2</sup> the children of his first wife, Agatha Barclay,<sup>3</sup> of Youngsbury. Nearer still, at "the Grove"—Lakenham Grove—a pleasant house amongst trees, countrified though only just outside Norwich, John Gurney's younger brother, Joseph, had come to reside with his wife, Jane Chapman, and several

<sup>1</sup> He had also a shooting-box at Hampstead, near Holt, and a cottage at Northrepps, to both of which he delighted to retire, as they were free from the cares of business and had plenty of game. He added much to the property of Keswick, and, in conjunction with his father-in-law, David Barclay, and his brother-in-law, Robert Barclay, he purchased Thrale's great brewery, which became a vast source of profit to all concerned in it. Perkins, who had been Thrale's clerk, was taken into the firm.

<sup>2</sup> Agatha Gurney—"Gatty"—married Samson Hanbury of Poles in Hertfordshire, brother to her father's second wife. She was very beautiful. With her brother, she had been almost entirely brought up by her maternal grandfather, Mr. Barclay of Youngsbury, the friend of Wilberforce, a very strict and stern Quaker.

<sup>3</sup> One of the sisters of David Barclay of Youngsbury was Catherine, who married Daniel Bell: another, Christiana, married Joseph Gurney, youngest son of John Gurney and Hannah Middleton, and was the mother of Priscilla Hannah, often afterwards mentioned, and Christiana: another was Mrs. Springall—"Aunt Springall."

daughters.<sup>1</sup> These formed at first the principal associates of the Earlham household, and the different members of the family so closely associated always had much influence upon each other: indeed, from their constant and most harmonious intercourse, they were like one large attached family dwelling in three houses. In their great intimacy the Barclays of Bury Hill participated, through their summer visits, and by their having a house at Cromer—Northrepps Hall, which Mr. Barclay afterwards sold to Richard Gurney of Keswick. Then, though he was a lax Friend, it must not be thought that John Gurney ever failed to receive “Friends” with the most patriarchal hospitality; on the contrary, their ministers were sure of the kindest welcome at Earlham, where one or other of them was constantly staying, till, becoming more intimate through habitual intercourse, these visitors gradually gained more influence over Mrs. Gurney’s mind,—an influence most un-

<sup>1</sup> Of these, Hannah (frequently mentioned towards the close of these Memoirs) married Jonathan Backhouse of Darlington, and became a well-known preacher amongst Friends. Jane married Henry Birkbeck, and died at the birth of her only son, Henry Birkbeck of Stoke Holy Cross. The beautiful Elizabeth married Robert Barclay, a banker. Emma married Joseph Pease of Darlington, for some time M.P. for the county of Durham. Rachel died unmarried in 1816.



welcome to her children, from the greater strictness they inculcated.

Each year added to the number of the Gurneys of Earlham, where three more sons—Samuel, Joseph John, and Daniel—were born, so that four sons and seven daughters filled its nurseries and played under its old trees. The youngest boy, Daniel, was born on March 9, 1791. One of his sisters, Hannah, wrote eighty years afterwards:—

“We, the younger girls, were spending the morning at the farther end of the kitchen-garden, old nurse with us. Becky came to say a boy was born, and I remember the party of children allowed to go in to see the baby, holding on to each other’s frocks in an orderly line. Not two years after, I remember them in a similar line walking past their dying mother.

“Our grandmother, Elizabeth Kett, used to come to Earlham with Molly Neale, and bring us finger-cakes and sugar-plums. She was a stout old woman in a Friend’s dress. She gave her grandchildren a half-crown each, engraved with their initials and the date—October 12, 1786. Cousin Henrietta Gurney also used to come—in a very stiff stately dress—and sit in great formality on the sofa. She also always brought her little box of sugar-plums.”

When her youngest child, Daniel, was only fifteen months old, Mrs. John Gurney died.

There were many days of wandering, during which the sick lady would insist upon getting up and kneeling upon the bed to pray for her children, especially—frequently and earnestly—for Catherine, John, and Joseph. Joseph she spoke of as her “bright morning star.” During this time her children were kept away from her “in numb cloudiness and misery,” with a governess — “an uninformed Friend” — who had no comfort to offer them. But just as the mother’s life was passing away, she rallied sufficiently to try to console her heart-broken husband, and with her last words to enjoin upon her eldest girl, called, after herself, Catherine, the care of her motherless little ones. Her last words, repeated over and over again, were, “Peace: sweet is peace.”

## II

### DOUBTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

“ Lord, I believe not yet as fain I would ;  
Dimly Thy dealings have I understood ;  
Thy word and message yet to me have brought  
Only a shadow of Thy wondrous thought.

Fain would I follow on to know Thee, Lord,  
Fain learn the meaning of Thy every word ;  
Truth would I know—the truth that dwells in Thee,  
Setting the honest heart from doubting free.

Lord, I believe. Oh ! fan this trembling spark,  
Lest all my hope be lost in endless dark ;  
And when I yet believe not, lead Thou me,  
And help my unbelief, which seeks for Thee.”

—ELIZABETH FRENCH.

THUS, at seventeen, on the 17th of November 1792, the eldest of the Gurney sisters, who, at quite an early age, became known as Mrs. Catherine Gurney, found herself suddenly at the head of the Earlham household. There was no relation, no kind aunt, to help her, as Mrs. Barclay, her father's only sister, lived too far off, and was too much occupied by her own large family ; indeed, in another year she had herself passed away. Only

what assistance faithful servants could give she had in Hannah Judd, the admirable house-keeper, and Sarah Williman, the devoted nurse.

"Here then we were left," wrote Catherine Gurney long afterwards, "I not seventeen, at the head, wholly ignorant of common life, from the retirement in which we had been educated, quite unprepared for filling an important station, and unaccustomed to act on independent principle. Still, my father placed me nominally at the head of the family—a continual weight and pain which wore my health and spirits. I never again had the joy and glee of youth."

But most nobly was she true to her trust. With great firmness, quick sympathy, and entire disinterestedness, the elder sister fulfilled a mother's part. Her rule was one of love, in which no fear was mingled; but her word was law. The younger members of the family were never known to rebel against "Kitty's advice," which on serious questions was generally given after conference with her father, and sometimes with her sisters Rachel and Elizabeth. She directed her sisters' education, and heartily rejoiced when they outstripped her powers. As, in after years, one after another passed from their quiet home into a world of action, her interest in them was always

the same, and she never ceased to rejoice in their faithfulness and its fruits, whilst never deviating herself from her own quiet course of unobtrusive usefulness. Through the seventy-four years in which she was spared



EARLHAM HALL.<sup>1</sup>

to be its blessing, she continued to be the axis round which the whole family revolved, the centre of the love, harmony, and unity which she never ceased to inculcate.

<sup>1</sup> From a sketch by Richenda Gurney, afterwards Mrs. Cunningham.

"My chief companions," writes Mrs. Catherine in her old age, "were my two eldest sisters, Rachel and Betsy. Rachel was fourteen when our mother died—a lovely girl, full of native charm and attraction, very sweet in her person, fair and rosy, with beautiful dark blue eyes and curling flaxen hair. She was all activity and vigour, and of the most lively disposition, as well in affectionate sympathies as in the brightness of her mind. Full of playfulness, she had a great turn for humour and drollery. In outward fascinations she was far the most attractive of the sisters; her singing was full of compass and expression; and though she had no opportunity of cultivating her great taste for music, she would warble on in native simplicity. I often felt no sounds were so touching as her voice and Betsy's when they sang together; for Betsy also had an exquisite voice, and threw into it all the expression that the heart can give. The remembrance of their beautiful old songs is one of the pleasantest that I retain. The two sisters, I think, sang with equal power, taste, and feeling.

"Rachel was a most industrious girl, energetic and persevering in all she undertook, full of purpose, and liking to take a part in everything that passed. The great susceptibility of her nature led to much suffering as well as enjoyment in her future history. A sweet and lovely creation, her natural qualities of mind and heart, when matured and refined, as they afterwards were, by religion, presented a rare combination of enlarged judgment combined with the most attractive manner in the world.

"Betsy was more than a year younger. She had

more genius than any one, from her retiring disposition, gave her credit for in her early days. She had tender feelings, especially towards her parents, to whom she was the most loving and obedient of any of their children. She was gentle in look and manner, and pleasing in person; though she had not Rachel's glowing beauty, yet some thought her quite as attractive. She disliked learning languages, and was somewhat obstinate in her temper, except towards her mother. After we were left alone, her aversion to learning was a serious disadvantage to her, and though she was quick in natural talent, her education was very imperfect and defective. Enterprise and benevolence were the two predominant features of her character, and wonderfully did these dispositions afterwards unfold under the influence of religion. In contemplating her remarkable and peculiar gifts, I am struck with the development of her character, and the manner in which the qualities, considered faults when she was a child, became virtues, and proved in her case of the most important efficacy in her career of active service. Her natural timidity was, I think, in itself the means of her acquiring the opposite virtue of courage, through the transforming power of Divine grace, which stamped this endowment in her with a holy moderation and nice discretion that never failed to direct it aright. Her natural obstinacy, the only failing in her temper as a child, became that finely tempered decision and firmness which enabled her to execute her projects for the good of others. What in childhood was something like cunning, ripened into the most uncommon penetration, long-sightedness, and

skill in influencing the mind of others. Her disinclination to the common methods of learning appeared to be connected with much original thought and a mind acting on its own resources. There had always been much more of genius and ready, quick comprehension, than application or argument. The process by which all her natural qualities became moulded into their present form was a striking and instructive instance of the gradual but certain and efficacious progress of religion. She was about seventeen, I believe, when the good impressions she had imbibed from her mother in her earliest years began to revive. It seemed as if the filial affection, still tender and lively, towards her father, was the germ of love towards God, as if the dependence and obedience of the one relation led to the same feelings being brought out in the other. There was more timidity and scrupulousness in her early than in her mature religion, more of sectarian and peculiar view, but as her experimental knowledge of the Gospel advanced, her sympathies became enlarged, and the line into which she was drawn by her public engagements taught her in the most noble and catholic spirit to acknowledge the Truth under every form and modification. She became a living illustration of St. Paul's description of charity, few seeming to partake so abundantly of the glorious liberty of the children of God.

“Next to these sisters came our eldest brother John, a beautiful and affectionate boy, who, at twelve years old, a short time before our mother's death, had been sent to school at Wandsworth. Then came ‘the four girls,’ as we used to call them—Richenda, Hannah, Louisa,



and Priscilla, who, at the time of my mother's death, were charming and promising children. Richenda was the most easy-tempered, active, happy child imaginable, the leader of the four sisters in all their exercises and amusements, with as fine a voice as her two elder sisters; and though my father was quite impartial and equally kind to us all, he called her his favourite, because she was so like my mother. Hannah's playfulness was combined with much sweetness and good sense, and she had also a great deal of real beauty, being considered the handsomest of the four. Louisa had more talent than any of them, and an energy which produced success in whatever she undertook. Priscilla's gentleness and cleverness were less remarkable than her absolute accuracy, and the tact and taste of all her actions.

"The three boys, Samuel, Joseph, and Daniel, were all very young when my mother died, and much under the care of our valuable old nurse, who was a second mother to them in attachment and affection. Samuel's independent character and his resistance to the school-room and learning, caused him to be sent to school at Wandsworth when he was eight years old. He went off by himself in the mail, and was a very resolute, independent child. Joseph was very different, and my mother on her death-bed called him her 'morning star,' as if presaging the various gifts and graces of his future. To his sisters he was the most delightful of brothers, fond of their society, and uniting in their pursuits, but always full of energy and taste for acquirement, and always reckoned the first boy at school, wherever he was placed. He was for some

years with Mr. Browne, a clergyman who kept a school in Norwich, and afterwards at Hingham, whither also his brothers went, having been moved from Wandsworth. When Mr. Browne's school was in Norwich, the boys used to spend Saturday and Sunday at home. From Hingham they went to Wymondham Meeting on a Sunday, and dined afterwards at Friend Hart's, the farmer's. After Sam and Joseph were of an age to leave his school, Mr. Browne recommended that Sam should be put to business, and Joseph to a higher kind of school. Accordingly Sam was placed with the Frys in St. Mildred's Court under Betsy's care, and Joseph was sent to Mr. Rogers, who lived at Oxford, and took a few pupils quite independently of the University, though within reach of some of its advantages. Here Joseph made great acquirements. In the holidays he always filled his days with some study he could not pursue at school, and at all times showed the utmost susceptibility of good, whether religious, moral, or intellectual. His was indeed the good ground calculated to bring forth fruit abundantly.

"Daniel was only a year and a half old when he lost his mother, and his excellent nurse had his training chiefly in her hands.<sup>1</sup> He was afterwards educated at the same school as his brothers, and, like Joseph, was for some time with Mr. Rogers at Oxford.

"I often marvel at the fact that I had some power given to me, through all my own discomforts, to be rather a help to the younger ones. I am surprised at the degree of authority I had over them, with no love

<sup>1</sup> She died at Lynn in October 1809, having caught the scarlet fever from Daniel, whom she had gone to nurse there.



*Priscilla Gurney*  
*of Northam*



of power and no desire to exert it, but they always did look up to me, and even obey me as a kind of deputy mother."

"When," wrote John Gurney to Joseph Bevan, "I see my children delighting themselves in those pursuits in which my dear Catherine led them, and wherein she was chief companion, my feelings are truly mournful. But I feel the necessity of checking an indulgence of emotion which may become injurious, and I am always so afraid of throwing a damp upon my dear Kitty and the elder children, that I endeavour, as well as I can, to keep up the countenance of comfort."

It was in 1793 that Samuel Gurney, then only seven years old, was sent to school. His seven sisters all accompanied him for the first stage, and then the poor little child was put alone into the coach, in which there were no other passengers, to find his way to London, and thence to Wandsworth. Self-reliance was the first lesson which Mr. Gurney inculcated upon his children; but little Samuel hardly needed any discipline.

"He was," wrote his brother-in-law Mr. Fry afterwards, "manly, frank, and courageous, and, as such boys usually are, at the same time gentle and kind-

hearted; but, although easy to be entreated or persuaded, he was nevertheless capable of considerable firmness and decision, and was sure to manifest a suitable sense of wrong in case of anything unjust or unreasonable.

"I remember hearing that, when about eleven or twelve years of age, his father on one occasion took him to task rather too strongly, and gave orders, as a punishment, that he should be sent to bed before his usual time. However, at a much earlier hour than was prescribed, Samuel, on being inquired for, was nowhere to be found, until, after much searching, he was discovered in bed, and, on being questioned as to the cause of his early retirement, declared he had gone to bed from preference, as there was no place he liked so well."

Hannah, one of the younger Earlham sisters, wrote in her old age some notes describing her brother Joseph at this time.

"My first recollection of this dearest brother is of a very lovely boy, who, from his great beauty and his sweetness of disposition and manner, was a constant delight to his mother. He was so quick that he learnt French words almost as soon as he could speak at all, and so susceptible that I think before he was two years old he refused to take sugar because he had heard his sister say it was wrong to eat it on account of the slaves—a very prevailing idea at that time!

"He was full of tender feeling, of love and gentleness,

and he had a perfect temper, which nothing could irritate or render fretful. After the death of his mother, he became closely attached to his sisters, and very dependent on us, ever choosing to unite with us, or follow us in our gardening, building, or other employment. He was averse to the rougher pursuits of his brother Sam, who would go with the men to their work, ride the large farm-horses, or join Dunning the carpenter in his shop.

“I taught Joseph reading, spelling, and geography. I never remember his being naughty at his lessons with me except once, when staying at Northrepps, when I had to call in our sister Catherine to help me to manage him, and punish him by shutting him up. He was once whipped by my father, but most unjustly as we afterwards discovered. We had found a lark’s nest in the long grass. When we went the next day to visit it, it was gone. We all accused poor little Joseph, who we did not doubt had taken it. He was whipped by my father, partly for doing so, partly for refusing to confess the fault. To our real sorrow afterwards we found that the nest had been taken by Mr. David Lindoc that he might draw and paint it.

“Joseph had been nursed by a poor woman, the gardener’s wife, who lived in the park by the bridge. He was very fond of ‘Nurse Norman,’ and, when four or five years old, would escape to her cottage, to share with her children their fare of meal dumplings with apples inside. It amused us to follow him, and find him seated with the poor family at the little table by the cottage window. He was a nervous child, and soon frightened and made uncomfortable. Louisa was

particularly tender and kind to him, and always ready to soothe and to care for him. Frequently he woke in the evening much agitated and screaming; perhaps this was from fear, but a mother's sympathy and judgment were needed to discover the cause. When this occurred, we were all much concerned for him, but especially Louisa.

"As he reached the school-boy age, he became much more manly, and, though it was at first an effort to him, he learnt to ride and to play well at boys' games. Mrs. Buxton invited him at this time to come to stay with her spirited boys, and by these companions and their servant Abraham he was made to swim. They tied a rope round him, and would then encourage him to cross the river, and, just as he reached the opposite bank, would draw him back into deep water.

"He was always studious and fond of reading, and had a real enjoyment in his lessons. Whether at school or at home, he bore the character of a boy of unsullied conduct, of good nature, and of excellent talent."

In 1796 we find the youngest sister, Priscilla, then aged eleven, writing to Miss Enfield:—

"*August 20.*—Thee can't think how well we go on in lessons now. Dear Kitty is always with us, and teaches us. We are always dressed by six, and get as many lessons done before breakfast as we can. After breakfast we finish all those that we have to do, and then we seven girls get to our work, and one reads history to us for two hours. We are now



reading Livy's Roman History, which is very interesting, and I fully advise thee to read it. We are hard at lessons and our own employments the whole afternoon, and after tea we walk, if it is fine, for more than an hour with Kitty. We then come in and write our journals till supper—Kitty and Rachel and all.

“This is how we spend our day unless company or going out interrupt us, which it seldom does. We four are always together. We are much more intimate with one another than we were, and love one another even more than we did. Three are nothing without the other of us four younger ones. We are entirely like one, and nothing, I hope, will ever break the strong chain which unites us. Still we are nothing without Kitty; everything we know, and all the little good we can boast of, we owe almost entirely to her. Then, how odd it would be if she were not everything to us, and if we did not love her with our whole hearts. I love her as much as I can ever love anybody, and there is nothing I would not do to serve her. Betsy and Rachel too I love more than I can say: what should I do without them?”

The Gurney family—with the outward characteristics of meeting eyebrows and crooked little fingers—had many terms of expression which were almost peculiar to themselves. When they were not quite up to the mark, they were “off their centre;” when nervous or agitated, they “had their hurries.” The term “a family settlement,” in such frequent use

at Earlham, began when Catherine Gurney gathered her sisters around her to work whilst she read aloud to them. Her rule, though strict, was never severe. She was as president in a commonwealth of absolutely harmonious fellowship. She was never more than half a Quaker, and no one was happier than Catherine in playing at hide-and-seek with the younger children in the winding passages and "eighty cupboards" of the old house of Earlham; in arranging out-of-door amusements for her brothers; in encouraging her sisters in glee-singing, and in collecting small parties of neighbours for the lively little dances in which the whole family had then a healthy pleasure. The sisters enjoyed themselves immensely. They scoured the country on their ponies in scarlet riding-habits. On one occasion it is recorded that the seven linked arms drew a line across the road, and stopped the mail-coach from ascending the neighbouring hill.

Outside their own home, the pleasantest interests of the Earlham sisters centred around their Uncle Richard's home of Keswick—Kiswick the Gurneys called it. This still is, as it was, a large quaint white house with wings, in a hollow amongst tall Scotch firs and fine evergreens. The river Yare flows through

the low ground at the end of the long garden walks, and has a bathing-house on its bank, and islets bright with snowdrops and aconites in spring.<sup>1</sup>

To Catherine Gurney her younger sisters confided everything ; nor was her beneficial influence with them lessened with her younger companions when they found that she shared—in a quiet and gentle fashion—their dread of the Quaker Sundays, of the long dreary silence, and even more dreary sermons of the Meetings to which their father wished all his children to go once, and generally twice on a Sunday. These Meetings took place in Norwich at the quaint Dutch-looking Meeting-house, with high roofs and a many-windowed front, approached by Goat's Lane—"That disgusting Goat's," we find the younger members of the family calling it ; and to their Sunday journals, wearisomely and laboriously written, we often find appended "Goat's was *dis*," which only the initiated would translate into "the Meeting was disgusting."

Betsy Gurney mentioned to Mr. Pitchford a curious circumstance relating to herself in her

<sup>1</sup> A quarter of a mile distant, on higher ground, now stands New Keswick Hall, which contains admirable portraits by Opie of Hudson Gurney and his sister Agatha,

childhood. So much was she impressed with horror at reading of the sacrifice of Isaac, that she always dreaded going to Meeting lest her parents should sacrifice her there.



THE MEETING-HOUSE IN GOAT'S LANE, NORWICH.<sup>1</sup>

The journals which have been alluded to played a great part in Catherine Gurney's

<sup>1</sup> The Meeting-house, built by subscriptions of members of the Society in 1679-80, retains all the quaint character of that date. It will always be interesting from the persecution which attended its opening, as described by Benjamin Bangs in his journal.

“Our first meeting in the house was on a Fourth-day in the year

system of education. Each of the younger members of the family was expected to write

1680, which was pretty large and comfortable, for the Lord's blessed presence was among us, and we parted peaceably.

"The First-day following, we met again in the morning, which meeting also ended in peace, to our great satisfaction. In the afternoon the meeting was much larger, but towards the conclusion thereof came the Recorder, with old Parson Whitefoot, priest of the parish, and several officers, soldiers, and others. I was at prayer when they came in, and the Recorder and the priest stepped upon a seat, and there stood till I had almost done; then the Recorder cried out, 'Silence there.'

"When I arose from my knees, he asked me my name, and what trade I was of, and then ordered the constables to take me out into the passage that goes to the street, and then went on taking the names of Friends present; but the old priest was quickly weary of staying, for several told him it ill became him to appear there, to encourage a spirit of persecution against his peaceable neighbours. The Recorder answered, 'You meet in contempt of the law.' He was answered, that we looked upon it as our indispensable duty to meet together to perform that worship which we owe to Almighty God, and that we were no disturbance to the Government, being peaceably met together, which they themselves were witnesses to the truth of.

"The old parson, as aforesaid, quickly withdrew and went into the street, but having stood there a while, he came in again, and stepping up to me said, 'You are a stubborn people, and might prevent all this trouble if you would come to church.' I, pointing to the steeple-house, said, 'What, dost thou call that the church?' He said, 'Yes, it is a church; if it be not a church, what is a church? I say it is the church!' I answered, 'The church of God is the ground and pillar of truth.' 'You talk!' said he, 'if I ask you one question of divinity, you cannot answer me a word.' I answered, 'How dost thou know that? Thou hast not yet tried me.' And he went away into the meeting again without any reply.

"He had not stayed long there but he came out again, and there being several people in the passage, he began to tell them the Quakers were an erroneous people; they denied Baptism and the Lord's Supper. I stepped up to him, and laid my hand upon his shoulder and said, 'Thou assertest what thou canst never prove.' 'Oh,' said he, 'are you

in them. A long time was set apart daily for this. Catherine did not demand to see the journals, though they were always willingly shown to her, and they sometimes enabled her—for she exacted absolute truthfulness in them—to follow the workings of conscience and character in each of her younger brothers and sisters. Masses of volumes written thus through life remain from the pen of each of the brothers and sisters, except John, who appears never to have kept a journal. Gradually the habits of self-examination and self-accusation thus engendered became forced and probably injurious; but earlier journals, whilst youth was still natural, give a capital picture of the family life.

LOUISA GURNEY'S JOURNAL.

“*Earlham, April 3, 1796.*—I am eleven years old. I love my father better than anybody except Kitty; she is everything to me. I cannot feel that she has a fault, and I am sure that I shall always continue to there?’ and so went into the street, and staying till the Recorder came out, they walked away together.

“Two Friends in the meeting having observed the Recorder’s rigorous proceedings, reminded him of the illegal proceedings of Empson and Dudley; at which he took such offence, that after he had done taking names, he made their mittimus, and sent them to prison, where I think they were confined till discharged by the following Quarter Sessions. I expected likewise to be committed, being kept all this time under a guard in the passage; but when the Recorder came out, he looked upon me, yet said nothing, but passed away, which the guard observing, they also passed away, and left me at liberty.”

love her as I do now. To dear Rachel I feel differently. I should love her more if I thought she loved me half as much as I love her. To Betsy I feel a particular sort of attachment: her ill-health and sweetness draw my heart to her entirely. John I love very much. To Chenda, how odd I feel! I often long to be intimate with her, but can't; I am so sharply repulsed. I think Hannah a superior girl in many respects, but she has some disagreeable qualities. I love the three dear little boys heartily: they will be charming men. I love dearest Elizabeth<sup>1</sup> truly, and am more intimate with her than with anybody in the world. I like all the Enfields very much: I think they are a most delightful family.

"I stayed at home from Goat's,<sup>2</sup> which I was most glad of. In the morning I was very low, but seeing Kitty quite revived me; she always brings joy into my heart. She talked to us in the afternoon, and it did me good."

"*April 5.*—Stayed at home to-day and had a pleasant morning. I am always so happy to escape from the claws of Goat's. We went on very nicely in our lessons: this morning has really improved me, and how nice it is to feel oneself improved."

"*April 7.*—Dear Kitty was poorly. All my thoughts were centred on her. If she was to die, I think I could not bear it; we should lose a mother, for I am sure she is one to us."

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards her sister-in-law, Mrs. John Gurney.

<sup>2</sup> The Quakers' Meeting-house in Goat's Lane.

"*April* 8.—I have done nothing to-day to please anybody, nor the least good. I am really a most disagreeable common character, and the reason why people love me can be only from habit."

"*April* 12.—All the others set off this morning for Goat's, leaving Joe, Danny, and me with the governess. I was busy all morning at lessons and making a cake to send to dear Sammy at school. The governess was most disagreeable."

"*April* 14.—I do not know what we shall do when Betsy comes home, for we are all afraid of her now, which is very shocking.<sup>1</sup> . . . Dearest Betsy! she seems to have no one for her *friend*, for none of us are intimate with her. I had a cloud over me in the evening, but Kitty soon dispersed it: she is to my mind as the sun on a rainy day."

"*April* 15.—Kitty and Joseph and Dan went to Cousin Freshfield's. We are never so comfortable when Kitty is away. I am always afraid of doing anything behind her back that I would not do before her, and it is difficult to be steadfast to what we know she would like when she is not constantly with us."

"*April* 17.—How often Sundays do seem to come! After breakfast I went to Goat's, not quite so disagreeable as usual. It is astonishing how one can put up

<sup>1</sup> Then, and for long afterwards, Betsy was subject to great fits of depression. Her expression for this, being in a "valley"—a sinking—was long used in the family.



with people and things. . . Kitty took us into the garden and talked most sweetly to us: she told us she thought we were all very much improved, particularly *me*."

"*May 30.*—This morning I thought of nothing but the election, I was so interested in it. At ten we all set off to Friend Toll's in the market-place, and there we looked out of the window all the morning. Norwich was in the greatest bustle. We had blue cockades, and I bawled out of the window at a fine rate—'Gurney for ever!' Hudson was tossed in the chair. He looked most handsome, I never saw him look so handsome or so well. In the afternoon I was in the most dissipated mind. In the evening, as Eliza and I were walking, Scarnell came home and told us that Windham had got the election. I cannot say what I felt, I was so vexed—Eliza and I cried. I hated all the aristocrats: I felt it right to hate them. I was fit to kill them."

"*June 1.*—I will write about Earlham. My father is master, Kitty is mistress. Governess, disliked by most of the family, sits in the drawing-room almost all day. Rachel and Betsy have their own employments. Rachel and Kitty sleep together in the Blue Room: the closet is entirely Rachel's. The nursery is where Betsy, Hannah, Cilla, and I sleep. The night-nursery is the boys' room and nurse's. Chenda sleeps with the governess. The first maid is Judd, a convinced Friend and trustworthy old servant. Nurse Sarah Williman comes next, and is very particular

about us : her greatest happiness is to see us neat : she often tires me by scoldings about keeping my clothes neat. . . . Scarnell<sup>1</sup> is a worthy man, who has had the greatest concern to be a Friend, and is now going to be one. Mr. and Mrs. Driver and their baby live at the lodge gate. . . . We have lived in this sweet place ten years."

"*June 1.*—Kitty and Hannah went to Goat's : we three have been blessed with staying at home lately because of our coughs. Governess is going away : I am most glad she is, I dislike her so very much : I think it must do harm to the heart to feel such dislike as I do. Dearest Cousin Peggy (Lindoc) is coming to stay. . . . I have lately done scarcely anything that Kitty has told me without grumbling : I can't say how sorry I am : I intend to set out to-morrow with fresh vigour, and to take the greatest pains with myself, and I think I shall find the proverb true—'Where there's a will, there's a way.'"

"*June 13.*—In the afternoon we walked about instead of lessons—I do so like my liberty.<sup>2</sup> I think it most silly to bring children up to be always at work. I am sure I should be better and happier if I did not learn much : it does try my temper so much."

<sup>1</sup> The butler, who afterwards married Mrs. Judd.

<sup>2</sup> In reference to the liberty of Catherine Gurney's rule, Daniel Gurney's Reminiscences relate how his four younger sisters never wore bonnets in the garden or park at Earlham, but put on little red cloaks, in which they ran about as they liked.

"*June 21.*—To-day is the great day of the Yearly Meeting. All Friends come that like it. We had not so many as usual, only twenty-seven. We went to a long *dis* Meeting after breakfast.

"Rachel has begun to teach us our lessons. I like her teaching very much, though not nearly so much as Kitty's; she treats me as other girls are treated, but Kitty treats us as though we were reasonable creatures. I hate the common way of teaching children; people treat them as if they were idiots, and never let them judge for themselves."

"*July 27.*—I have been at Keswick. Elizabeth and I had a sweet evening. I do love her so much. I love being at Keswick for Elizabeth's company, yet in the parlour there is constant restraint; I am so afraid of the Hanburys. I wonder that so charming a person as Gatty<sup>1</sup> should marry Samson Hanbury."

"*July 31.*—After breakfast I picked most of the servants some gooseberries, and Judd's mother a whole basketful. How very good of me! I have the greatest pleasure in doing things to please others; it is one of my best qualities. . . . Another of my qualities which people call most bad, but which I think rather good, is that I cannot bear strict authority over me. I do from the bottom of my heart *hate* the preference shown in all things to my elders merely because they have been in the world a little longer. I do love equality and true democracy."

<sup>1</sup> Agatha Gurney of Keswick.

"*August 1.*—I got up early and wrote to Elizabeth, who is rather *dis* to me now. I do not like her as much as I did. I felt extremely cross in the morning, so many little things came to cross me. I have been quite struck lately with my own disagreeableness. We four did something in the afternoon which Kitty had forbidden us, and my conscience pinched me the whole time. I have also been rather selfish to-day."

"*August 6.*—Rachel sang in the evening. Kitty stood by me in the window. She took my hand and almost said she loved me. How charming! All my old feelings of love to her returned. The evening was so delightful and Rachel's singing so touching. I went to bed in the most happy frame of mind and body."

"*August 7.*—Sammy and John went to school in the afternoon. I pitied poor dear Sam, but I was not very sorry. I was very good in the afternoon in giving up my own pleasure and doing what I thought Kitty would like."

"*August 10.*—Betsy has talked to me, and quite convinced me that we do not treat my father with sufficient love; but I really do love my father from the bottom of my heart."

"*August 14.*—Betsy is so ill, I look forward with the most gloomy ideas concerning her. . . . A great many Friends came to tea. I did all I could to please them. How charming it is to feel one is giving

pleasure! though I never can say how stupid they were to me. . . . After tea Kitty chose we should work again; this was rather *a tug* to me, but I bore it pretty well, only Kitty *did* provoke me by making me give up something to Chenda, merely because she was the eldest; there is nothing I hate so much as this sort of partiality; it *does* provoke me so. We read a little Sacred History; I like the New Testament amazingly."

"*August 19.*—I was very angry with Rachel for treating Chenda differently, just because she is a little older than me; there is nothing on earth I detest so much as this. I think children ought to be treated according to their merit, not their age. I love democracy, whenever and in whatever form it appears."

"*August 24.*—I got up early and made a pin-cushion for nurse's sister. I think it is quite right to pay these sort of attentions to servants, and if we do it out of kindness, it is more virtue to give a present to a person who has been rather ungrateful to you. I hate Betsy's management of our lessons. Now that Kitty is away at Northrepps, Betsy does it, and is quite disagreeable, she is so soon worried."

"*August 27.*—After breakfast, Betsy, Madge, Danny, and I went to the Herings'. We went in the chaise, and as there was not room for us all on the seat, they set me on the head of the chaise. I never had such a jostling uncomfortable ride. We had a nice little dinner, and afterwards went into the garden and picked cherries and plums. At tea officers and

gentlemen came in; they were most *dis* and flirtatious. At supper I ate so many brandy cherries that I was half tipsy; so Madge and Betsy took me into their room and stuffed some salts and rhubarb down my throat."

"*August* 28.—I was in a melancholy mind; poor Joe was so hurried at Goat's. I never did see such a family for hurries as ours. The afternoon was most *dis*. I felt out of humour amazingly; how silly! I feel as in rather a bad mind, and Peggy and Betsy increased it by saying 'Art thee well in thy mind, dear?' and things of that sort."

"*Sept.* 19. — Rachel Barclay,<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth, and I dressed ourselves up and went begging: we deceived a few persons, though most people knew me. I read 'Paul and Mary' till dressing-time; it almost made me cry, but I think it most silly to sit down and cry at home. I have read it twelve times and like it better every time; I could always cry at it. Margaret sent me to Judd to beg she would not forget something. Judd's reply was in the crossdest, proudest way—'Go away, child, I never forget anything' (which was quite a mistake). I think I have much less pride than most people. Hudson spent the evening. I liked him, and I think he likes me more than most girls; how pleasant it is to be liked."

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Barclay and his family spent several weeks every year at Earlham. He had eleven children, four sons and seven daughters, exactly the same number as his brother-in-law, John Gurney, and each boy and girl in the two families had his fellow. The great attachment between the families, begun in infancy, continued through life.

"*Sept. 31.*—I was at Keswick on Sunday. Dearest Elizabeth was quite charming. I do love her with my whole heart. It flutters me to think such a charming person should make me her friend. Rachel and Kitty have come home. Rachel treats me as a baby, which puts me in a passion with her, and yet I would do anything in the world to serve her. . . . As for dear John, I love him truly as a brother, and consider him generous, good-tempered, and sweet; though I think he has no real character: but dearest Sam will be a most charming man."

"*Oct. 15.*—Kitty has forbidden us now to write more than six lines in our journals. I entirely see that it is now her plan to treat us as babies: I am very, very sorry."

"*Oct. 19.*—Betsy had a talk with Kitty about me in the evening; she opened my eyes as to how much Kitty does for us: so I love her more than ever, and intend to do everything to please her. We had pleasant dancing with Gatty and Anna.<sup>1</sup> Nothing elates me so much as dancing: I like it so much."

"*Oct. 29.*—In the morning Peggy told me she thought I had lost all my talent of obliging. They all seem to dislike me: how odd! It is because I do not give up to them entirely: I don't know whether I shall or not."

"*Oct. 31.*—A great deal of grand company came

<sup>1</sup> Agatha and Anna Gurney of Keswick.

to-day. I do dislike all company except Pitchford. I wrote to dear Sammy: I love him *most*: he is far sweeter than Joe. The Barclays came in the afternoon and were most *dis*."

"*Nov. 8.*—Gatty and Anna came. In the afternoon we acted a play, which was most droll. I was 'Tom.' I do like pleasant amusement. After tea, we all, great and small, had the drollest meeting, and finished up with a dance. I do like Gatty; I like Anna far less."

"*Nov. 9.*—We eight went to Goat's and to the Grove in the afternoon. Aunt Jane Gurney gave us two guineas between us. How generous, and what a help to us! We have got four guineas, four shillings, and four sixpences: how lucky! We went to tea at the Aggs': a *dis* evening. I think prejudices are hardly ever got over. I wish there was no such thing as prejudice."

"*Nov. 16.*—We lighted a fire in the field this afternoon, and roasted potatoes in the ashes. There was company in the evening, and my father would have Chenda and me dance a Scotch minuet—most *dis*."

"*Nov. 25.*—Uncle (Richard) Gurney brought me to his house at Northrepps two days ago. I had a most *dis* drive. How amazingly dull being here, to be sure. I was most uncomfortable all morning, and great was my joy to see Chenda, Hannah, and my father arrive in the evening."



"*Nov.* 26.—How glad I am to be at Earlham again. We have romped most of the morning. In the afternoon we read a novel. In the evening a blind fiddler came, and we had a most merry dance, and ended with a violent romp. I like Mrs. Freeman vastly. I do think she will answer."<sup>1</sup>

"*Dec.* 4.—I had rather a pleasant Goat's this morning. In the afternoon we all talked together very charmingly. I want to say that I think Kitty and the others have behaved most kindly to me, as if they thought me improved. How glad I am! I will do all I can to make them love me. Betsy and Kitty have just told me my greatest fault is boldness. I must cure myself of it. We generally dine at three, but to-day dined at four, and had an immense deal of company. I did so dislike one officer who was here; he was so flirting."

"*Dec.* 16.—We dined at Keswick to-day. I have been reading the 'Vicar of Wakefield' and Robertson's 'History of America.' How I do like a good romp. Elizabeth dined with us to-day; she is most sweet; how I do love her! A fiddler came in the evening, and we had a charming dance. How delightful it is to dance to music!

"When I had a sore throat and was poorly on Friday, Kitty nursed me most kindly: I never saw so kind and sweet a nurse. Nothing particular has happened

<sup>1</sup> A Quaker lady-help, Mrs. Elizabeth Freeman, afterwards called Grandmamma Freeman; she came to Earlham for a fortnight and stayed thirty years.

lately, but I have been most happy, most interested in my own improvement. It is now settled that we are to buy and take care of our own clothes. I am very glad of it, for I think it is a very good plan. I do geography in the afternoon, which does not improve me as much as my other lessons. I now spell, write, and cypher as well as most children — very useful things, but not very pleasant. All the dear boys are home for the holidays. They are most sweet. We have been out a great deal; we jumped in the barn, and sat at the top of the high stack."

"*Feb.* 24, 1797.—I shall relate what has passed in my mind lately. I think that I am improved altogether. I have been extremely busy, and have got into a good way of gaining knowledge, but I think I have grown rather vain, which is a most disgusting fault. Rachel has done me the greatest good. I admire and love her more than I can say. Being parted from dearest Kitty for some time has not the least abated my love, but it has increased my fear of her. I do not feel in the least intimate with her, which often vexes me. She now and then takes us up, and does not allow us to have any opinion. These things would not be observed in any one else, but she is usually so kind, so good, and so charming, that even a cool word seems odd in her. And her present plan of treating us as children rather hurts me, being of a somewhat forward disposition. Pitchford has been here twice since Kitty has been gone, and we have had most delightful days. He brought us four a box of Portugal plums. I never knew anything so kind. We had a most

charming walk in the afternoon, when we all quarrelled for Pitchford's arm; we are so perfectly free with him. I can't say how I admire him. After dinner we talked very pleasantly till tea; after that we acted pantomimes, and then read poetry and enjoyed ourselves thoroughly. After supper was the most delightful time of any; I did feel so happy. They sang 'Come, ye lads and lassies fair.'

"My father has been to dine with the Prince;<sup>1</sup> he likes him very much, and is delighted that he is coming here on seventh-day week. Uncle Joseph, and Hannah, and Jane have been here, and Uncle Joseph<sup>2</sup> spoke to Rachel about going out to dances. He took her into the study, and when he was gone she burst out crying. I did pity her so much. I am afraid she must give it up. All our hope is now laid upon her having a pianoforte at home. They are trying this grand point with my father: may they succeed, but I much doubt it."

"*April 26.*—I have been but middling in mind lately. I have not entirely dropt all my good resolutions, but I do not keep up to them sufficiently. My principal plan was industry and perseverance; these are virtues that I think it is almost impossible to be anything without. . . . Prince William has been here with a great deal of company; I like him vastly. There was amazing fuss made about his coming. He is coming again next Sunday to meet the Gurneys, who have made a scolding about it. . . . I

<sup>1</sup> William Frederick, afterwards 2nd Duke of Gloucester.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Gurney of the Grove—a "plain Friend."

never felt in so happy and comfortable a state as I do now. I think I will write down how I spend my day.

"I always get up at five or six, which I call late. I read till breakfast, which I enjoy amazingly; the breakfast is a little after eight. I am most busy all the morning at lessons. I have about an hour for play. We dine at three. In the afternoon I write my French exercise and journal, and study botany, which I think is a most charming employment; to study nature in any way is delightful. We drink tea about six, and have the most pleasant evenings. We all sit and work while Kitty reads to us. We have been reading Hayley's 'Triumph of Temper,' which I only like tolerably. I went to Keswick yesterday. Elizabeth and I had a large syllabub, and sucked it through straws. I think my mind has been in a very good state. I am improving. It is very pleasant to think so sometimes. One of my chief faults is speaking unkindly to Betsy: she does so provoke me. She behaves in some things so aristocratically because she is the eldest, and nothing makes me so angry as that. How very pleasant is Pitchford's company! We had a charming walk, and then we came in and sat round the fire with Pitchford. He talked most interestingly, principally about religion. I can't say how much I admire what he said—the happiness he had in prayer, and he showed what a *most* delightful thing real devotion is, and what a comfort and support religion is to the mind. He spoke so charmingly and became so animated about it, it was enough to make one religious. I am determined I will be

religious—*really* so, I mean. When Pitchford was gone, I went to bed, and lay awake till Kitty came. What Pitchford had said had got so completely into my mind, that I thought about it the whole time, and somehow Kitty and I fell into talk about it. She said that it was only very lately that she had felt *real* devotion, and that it had made her far happier. I now intend to make it my aim to follow Pitchford and Kitty: I never saw such perfect characters as they. The last time I was at Keswick, Elizabeth told me she wondered we were not all more charming than we are, living with Kitty. It rather hurt me: I don't know why, but it did. I believe it was because I felt it was true. I am determined I will try to make myself worthy of the pains that such a person as Kitty takes with me.

“I really see and know my own faults. I know that I have a great many, and that it will require time and patience to cure them. I do not think I have a bad temper, but, on the contrary, very good. I am very affectionate, and my heart is open to warm impressions. I can't bear restraint, and it is difficult to govern me by strictness, though very possible to do it by kindness and persuasion. I think I am not selfish, but the contrary. I have a bold forwardness, which is disgusting. I oppose all restraint with too much vigour. I always tell my opinions and think them better than those of other people who are wiser than I am. I think I am self-conceited. I have no mildness in my character, for I only see the virtues of a few, and look down with contempt upon the general run. I am wanting in real fortitude, though nothing is so useful.”

"*May 29.*—We were told that we were to go in the afternoon to the Rigbys' at Manningham, but the weather was so bad we could not decide whether to go or not. Betsy was for going, Kitty for staying. At last, after scolding, rowing, bickering, fixing and unfixing, we all agreed to go. Chenda and Betsy went first in the chaise: Kitty, Rachel, Hannah, Cilla, and I in the coach. We all got into good minds. When we reached the common, who should we see but John and Pitchford. We jumped out of the coach and I tore to them. How I do admire Pitchford. We had a delightful walk and a nice merry tea. At eight my father wished us to go home: I felt truly sorry, but every worldly pleasure must end. . . . I never admired any man so much as Pitchford: he is so truly virtuous; he is an example one should try to copy; it does one good to be with such a person."

"*June 3.*—We had a truly charming morning with dearest Kitty. We so seldom have any talk with her, that when we have, I value it more than ever. Darling Kitty! there is nobody I love half so much. I can't think how I ever could do anything to disoblige her. She told me that Cousin Margaret (Lindoc) was going to marry Dr. Crawford.<sup>1</sup> How odd! I never felt more surprised."

"*Sunday, June 4.*—I read half a Quaker's book through with my father before Meeting. I am quite sorry to see him grow so Quakerly. I had a most *dis* Goat's."

<sup>1</sup> This marriage did not take place.

"June 5.—In the evening I dressed up in Quaker things; but I felt far too ashamed to say or act anything."

"June 6.—Hudson (Gurney) came to dine. I like him very much sometimes when he is in his natural humour and when he is not at all *dis*. We had great frolics with him in the evening, for we locked him up in the pantry and played a number of tricks. We had a very merry supper, and I went to bed in a very happy mind, which is truly pleasant."

"Oct. 9.—Pitchford came this morning. He was very charming, yet, I don't know how it is, I admire his actions, thoughts, and sentiments more than I do himself."

"Oct. 13.—I have been in a good mind all day. The others have been truly disagreeable and idle. I was much inclined to catch the contagion, but I *would* not. I gave my mind entirely to my lessons. How far better it is to give our minds to the things we are about; it is the only way to do them well."

"Oct. 19.—I am afraid I shall be a flirt when I grow up. I really do think I shall. It is rather odd for me to begin talking about flirting; to be sure I am not a flirt yet, but then I think I shall be.<sup>1</sup> Flirtationing arises from vanity and too great love of admiration, particularly from men. Last night the Hoares and

<sup>1</sup> Louisa Gurney was now 12½.

Ketts were here ; we had a fiddle ; it would have been more delightful with a pleasant party, but I enjoyed it thoroughly ; nothing hardly can be disagreeable with a *dear, darling, elating fiddle*. I really am fit to jump out of my skin at the sound of it. Young Sam Hoare<sup>1</sup> was most disgusting ; we were on most good terms for the first part of the evening, but at last he went so far as to give me a kiss ; it was most disgusting. Still I was very agreeable last night ; I felt so both in mind and body ; how seldom can I say this of myself."

"*Sunday, Nov. 12.*—I have had a bad day. To be sure it is difficult to withstand Earlham Sundays, they are so truly disagreeable. Sometimes I think I will make better use of my time at Goat's, but when I get there, I seldom think of anything else but when it will be over, unless perhaps some little foolish circumstance happily engages my attention."

"*Nov. 14.*—On Monday Anna Enfield came. I think I hardly ever felt so much as when the coach came to the door : we four stayed in the little parlour. She went up into Kitty's room, and we followed. There, on a chair by the fire, sat a thin woman in a large bonnet, completely dressed in black. I could not believe it was our own Anna ; she looked inexpressibly interesting. She took her bonnet off, and then I began to recognise the features of our most dear Anna Enfield. She had a mob-cap on with a black crape band round it, a black

<sup>1</sup> Her future husband.



neckcloth, a coarse black muslin handkerchief, a black cotton gown. She looked thin and white, but I never saw any one look so charming. I thought I should have cried, she looked so very unhappy, but she spoke little. I marked all her actions and all her words, because I thought, as I looked at her, 'Ah, dear Anna, I shall not see thee again for a long while.'

"For years past I have had a jealousy about Chenda, which circumstances now and then bring forth. She is *far* the most pleasing character of us four, and all those by whom I should most wish to be admired prefer her; Kitty amongst the number. She far prefers Chenda, but she loves us all, and so I need not be anxious."

"*Nov.* 16.—Betsy went to the assembly last night, and danced a great deal. How most droll! quite a new excursion!

"I am most vexed, for I have often lately been discontented with what Kitty has fixed for me to do. How wicked it is to treat a person, and *such* a person as my own dearest Kitty, with the least degree of unkindness—and after all she has done for me. There is not one in ten thousand that would have done the same in her case. Has she not almost entirely devoted her life to us four, and is it not the least we can do to treat her always with the greatest affection, even if what she wishes be disagreeable?"

RICHENDA GURNEY'S JOURNAL.

"*Dec.* 23, 1797.—Went to the Hemings in the evening to meet the Prince and a large party. It was

very entertaining seeing everybody flirt and look so silly. There were a great many people, and our three did look delightful and superior amongst them all, especially dear Kitty. . . . I could not help thinking of it for some time after, and as Kitty says, 'red coats and fine ladies glittered before my eyes.'"



NORWICH FROM MOUSEHOLD.

"*Sunday, Dec. 24.*—I shall not say much of this day, as indeed it is not worth saying much about. It was flat, stupid, unimproving, and Sundayish. I spent *four* hours at Meeting! I never, never wish to see that nasty hole again."

"*Dec. 25.*—I have a pleasant association towards Christmas day; nice turkey and plum-pudding bring a train of such pleasant ideas to my mind."

"*Dec.* 28.—Yesterday was a day of glittering pleasure. Such days are glowing for the time, then they vanish like a shadow. Though His Royal Highness was to come, we did not on that account neglect the improvement of our minds, but worked hard at lessons all morning. After dinner was most pleasant. All of us eleven got round the Prince, and sang and were very merry. The pleasantest part, however, I think, of the whole was when the gentlemen came up to tea, and we sang a good deal more. Then His Royal Highness departed, after having kept his coach two hours waiting at the door. I went to bed in a most good mind, but very tired."

"*Dec.* 30.—This morning Kitty would not let us go to nooning till we had finished a lesson we were about. I felt out of humour, and tried to show it all I could. I did want my nooning, but after I had attained the desire of my wishes, I saw the full extent of my foolishness at being put out by so silly and trivial a thing. When I went to Kitty after eating my nooning, I was ashamed to speak to her, I felt so silly. Well, I will not be so weak another time."

"*Dec.* 31.—This is the last day I shall spend in 1797. To this year, adieu for ever! How pathetic!

"I had a truly uncomfortable cloudy sort of Meeting. It was real bliss to hear the clock strike twelve. What an impatient disposition is mine! I sometimes feel so extremely impatient for Meeting to break up that I cannot, if you would give me the world, sit

still. Oh, how I long to get a great broom and *bang* all the old Quakers, who do look so triumphant and disagreeable. . . . I rather enjoyed my afternoon, Rachel played so sweetly and Betsy sang."

"*Jan. 5, 1798.*—Earlham House is in a most disagreeable state: the boys are so worriting, and I have a nasty toothache, which has quite worn out my patience."

"*Sunday, Jan. 7.*—We walked to Meeting and talked French the whole way, so that it was an improving as well as a pleasant walk. I had then a pleasant, though not a very useful Meeting, for I only tried to entertain and not to improve myself. I went to Meeting again in the afternoon, but the rest of the day was flat."

"*Jan. 12.*—The Prince has been here again, and we have had a gay, pleasant, bustling time. I really don't know which of the days he was here was the pleasantest. He had not been here long before he insisted that Rachel should preach him a sermon. He and a great many of us ran up to Betsy's room, and Rachel gave a most capital sermon. I never saw anything so droll as it was to see the Prince and all of us locked up in Betsy's room, and Rachel preaching to him, which she did in her most capital manner, giving him a good lesson in the Quaker's strain, and imitating William Crotch to perfection. I longed for somebody to come and see us. The rest of the day was truly pleasant. I never saw

the Prince so sociable and agreeable as this time. Mary and he had a long talk at dinner, all about religion. He does so admire Rachel. After dinner we began to sing. Rachel sang delightfully: I don't know when I have heard her sing so well. . . . Betsy had *an offer* from one of the officers: I never knew anything so droll as the whole thing was. After the Prince was gone we had a dance; the finest dance I ever had: all joined, single and married, old and young, little and great. I had no idea that gay company could be as pleasant as it was. I do like the Prince for liking Kitty so much: I am sure it shows his taste, and I don't wonder at it. Rachel did look beautiful, and talked so cleverly all day, and she enjoyed it as much as any of us, which I am very glad of, as she seldom enjoys those sort of things.

"It was droll to have a dance on Wednesday night, and Thursday and Friday, and on Saturday we went to Dr. Alderson's and had a most pleasant evening indeed. We danced from seven to twelve. I don't know when I enjoyed dancing so much, there were such beaux, so superior to the bank boys. What a surprising difference rank and high life make in a person's whole way and manner: it is most pleasant being with people who have been brought up in that way. I am very glad to have seen a little of what high life is, for I think everybody who can should be acquainted with all ranks in society. We had a most merry time, I really did enjoy it."

"*January 17.*—I had a good drawing morning, but in the course of it gave way to passion with both Crome<sup>1</sup> and Betsy—Crome because he would attend to Betsy and not to me, and Betsy because she was so provoking."



THE "SULKIES" AT EARLHAM.<sup>2</sup>

"*January 23.*—I am sure nothing is so beneficial and good for the mind as being and feeling truly industrious and having your mind and all your powers

<sup>1</sup> "Old Crome," the Norwich drawing-master.

<sup>2</sup> These seats, so well known to all Gurneys, in the garden at Earlham, are made to turn on sockets, so that the occupants may sit face to face, or back to back, as they are disposed.

employed. Sometimes I am gifted, as it were, with one of these minds: I have been so this morning and afternoon, and it has made me feel quite happy. Cilla and I walked to Norwich, which I thoroughly enjoyed, but the Meeting did not give me true pleasure, with such a number round me ready to spy every word I uttered. . . . I am in a great measure conquering my dislike to speaking French: when any of us four and Betsy speak to one another in English, we have to pay a farthing."

"*January 27.*—I have been in one of my very best minds: how I do enjoy being in those minds. We were very happy walking together, Kitty and all of us. I cannot help also just mentioning my dinner, which was particularly delightful to me: I really felt true pleasure while I was eating excellent apple-pudding and partridge: how I did enjoy it."

"*February 5.*—Friend Savery has been here, who seems a charming man and a most liberal-minded Quaker. Betsy, who spent all yesterday with him, not only admires, but quite loves him. He appears to me a truly good man, and a most upright Christian, and such men are always loved. To me he is quite different from the common run of disagreeable Quaker preachers. In every society and sect there is always something good and worthy to be found. I feel this evening in a most comfortable mind."

"*February 6.*—I spent part of my morning most pleasantly—I may say most charmingly, for they were

all gone to Meeting, and I walked by myself about the fields, with the most melancholy delightful feelings reflecting on the future state. I came in full of these thoughts and in a most comfortable mind, when they came home cross and bordering upon disagreeable."

"*February 7.*—I am in Kitty's room all alone, every one of them gone out. I think it a good habit being alone; it makes you depend on your own mind. . . . I have been in a good mind to-day, though the others say I have been in a provoking one."

"*Sunday, February 11.*—I feel this evening Sundayish and disagreeable: my whole day has been rather so. I went to Meeting in the morning, and I was very sorry to see that place again after a separation from it of a whole fortnight. However, I had a pleasanter Meeting than sometimes. We all came home, however, rather goatified and cross."

"*February 14.*—I was in a very playing mood to-day, and thoroughly enjoyed being foolish, and tried to be as rude to everybody as I could. We went on the highroad for the purpose of being rude to the folks that passed. I do think being rude is most pleasant sometimes. In the afternoon, over a difficult French lesson, Cilla was very provoking. I do go on so nicely in drawing, that it is quite charming."

"*Sunday, February 18.*—Yesterday I had a truly disagreeable visit. Uncle Gurney was in one of his most disagreeable satirical minds, and made me the





*Richenda Gurney*  
*of Earlsdon*



subject of ridicule to the whole company, because I had a cap on to keep my head warm. I am sure I wished both him and my cap a thousand miles off. I was truly angry with him, disagreeable man. . . . I went to Goat's in the morning, and stayed at home in the afternoon. Betsy is going to London for a month, and I am very glad for her sake: I think she will enjoy it so much."

"*February 24.*—We four have not gone on in a comfortable way for a week past: we have been so disorderly and have given way to just what we felt at the moment. This morning Kitty and us four had a talk, which we almost always have after being in one of these sort of states. I do not doubt we shall all be the better for it. Kitty somehow showed us how weak and faulty we were, so that I cannot bear to think of us four. Indeed, I think entirely as Kitty does, that it is almost impossible to pass through this world without having a strict principle over your mind to act by."

### III

#### SPIRITUAL CONFLICTS

"How do those who have no happy home within their own hearts become the prey of the external circumstances upon which they are driven."—M. A. SCHIMMELPENNINCK.

"Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses, whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future predominate the present, advances us in the scale of human beings."—DR. JOHNSON.

THE wave of infidelity which came into England with the French Revolution took nowhere a stronger hold than at Norwich. "Cousin Peggy" (Lindoc),<sup>1</sup> the most intimate relation and the prime favourite of the whole party at Earlham, became increasingly affected by it. "We elder sisters were ourselves in no small degree carried off our centre," writes Catherine Gurney; "our sense of duty became gradually lowered, especially towards my father: of higher duties still, we became indeed careless and unmindful." The younger sisters were more

<sup>1</sup> In the Fry family are preserved seven letters full of tenderest affection, written on the same day to "Dear darling Cousin Peggy" by the seven Gurney sisters of Earlham, and enclosing long tresses of their hair, for the most part bright glistening auburn hair.

sheltered than their elders, and went on very tolerably in the routine of education under their governess, Mrs. Berington. But where the younger members of the house were always of the party, they could not but hear many doubts and difficulties discussed, and form their own conclusions, and it must have given Catherine Gurney rather a shock when she found that her sister Richenda, of thirteen, had written—

“*February 25.*—Kitty read the New Testament to us, which I was unusually interested in, but at this time I do not believe in Christ. I mean I do not believe all that the New Testament says of Him . . . though I have not yet brought the subject to any point in my own mind.”

Louisa Gurney was not troubled with the doubts which beset Richenda, but the times at which she “found religion” were unusual for a Quaker. Thus in *her* journal we read:—

“*April 26.*—Yesterday we had a most delightful dance. John Taylor, Pitchford, and F. Bevan came here. I was in ecstasies after supper with dancing Malbrook. Two things raise my soul to feel devotion—nature and music. As I went down the dance yesterday, I gave up my soul to the enchanting Malbrook. I thought of Heaven and of God. I really tasted Heaven for a minute, and my whole heart

thanked God for the blessings I enjoyed. These moments were delicious."

Richenda was soon not the only Gurney of Earlham who found "Goat's" the more unbearable because she doubted the main truths of Christianity. The religion of almost the whole family was rapidly becoming undermined, and all external circumstances seemed to combine in conducing to this. The eldest brother, John, had been removed from Wandsworth, and placed with a Dr. Enfield who took pupils in Norwich, and whose family had begun to exercise a great influence over the young Gurneys. Catherine wrote long afterwards :—

"Before I lost my mother I had attended some lectures of Dr. Enfield's, and conceived a most enthusiastic admiration for the Misses Enfield, which I never ceased to retain. One of my greatest desires was to be better acquainted with them, and I lost no opportunity of accomplishing it. My mother had discouraged it, for, as she became more of a Friend, she feared and disapproved any connection with Unitarians, which the Enfields decidedly were. I conclude this was the case, though I never recollect her expressing it. But the impulse in our minds, my own especially, towards this family, now that the occasion of further acquaintance was presented, was too strong to be resisted by my father, and the



Catherine Gurney.  
By W. W. W.





barrier was at once removed by our rushing with the utmost impetuosity and delight into each other's society.

"On looking back through the distance of years upon our intercourse, I feel that there was a singular congeniality of natural character between us, and I always remember these friends of our youth with a most peculiar love and interest. They were charming young people, gifted by nature and much cultivated, highly pleasing in person and manners. They had the religion of sentiment, but no knowledge of Scriptural truth. We never thought about that, but took a romantic pleasure in the beauties of Nature, and in sentimental enjoyments, intercourse with each other, singing, and some few books. Rousseau, amongst the few, soon came into fashion as the most interesting of any, and I need not say how undermining this was to truth, both in theory and practice. The foundations of truth and duty, such as had existed for us before, were shaken, and we were led astray in conduct. My father in the meantime was very unhappy, and at a loss how to treat the case. He had not the decision or power to resist the stream of our affections, which became more and more exclusively fixed on our own friends and favourites; and this was in no slight degree strengthened by the intense affection which sprung up between Rachel and Henry Enfield, and which was carried on for several years in concealment from our indulgent father, who had a painful and confused sense of our going wrong, and yet could not prevent it.

"At length my father discovered the truth, and insisted upon a separation, not only between Rachel and Henry Enfield (whose distress caused him to

promise that they should be allowed to meet again if they continued in the same mind after a separation of two years), but from the whole Enfield family. This was to us all a blow of no common pain and trial, and hard did we feel it to be kept in such constraint, separated from our dearest friends. At the same time our opinions, which began in sentiment, had advanced to infidelity, for we were still thrown amongst those who held these views, and the volumes of Godwin, Paine, &c., had fallen into our hands, so that we were truly in the wilderness of error. It made me very unhappy. The others—except Rachel—having more natural glee and spirits, were not depressed in the same way. The people we now were frequently with went far beyond our dear friends the Enfields, who were never infidels.”

The influence first exerted in bringing back the Gurney family to the paths of faith and of orthodoxy was a very singular one. John Pitchford, a Roman Catholic surgeon, had settled in 1769 at Norwich, where he lived at No. 8 Tombland, till 1803. His learning as a botanist led to his being welcomed as a guest at Earlham, whither he was first accompanied, on January 24, 1797, by his son John, also a Roman Catholic, educated at St. Omer, who was working at Norwich in a laboratory. The younger John Pitchford soon became very intimate with the Gurney sisters,

and a fast friend of the family, and while joining heartily in all their amusements, lost no opportunity of urging upon them the truth of the Christianity which he ardently professed himself, whilst honourably and scrupulously avoiding everything like proselytism. "He and Mr. Kinghorn, the Baptist minister," writes Catherine Gurney, "were the only two amongst the literary young men of Norwich with whom we were acquainted who steadily and consistently upheld the cause of religion against the infidelity which prevailed in the place at that time; and he was the first person after the dreary period I have described who made us like religion, or even set up a standard of high principle, and he was strictly honourable to my father in never lending us books he thought he would dislike, or consenting to be a channel of communication with the Enfields."

John Pitchford was for months almost daily at Earlham, reading, singing, walking, boating, and playing cricket, and finishing up the evening with a dance. He thus describes one of his visits :—

"*July 27, 1797.*—This is a day which I shall ever remember with delight. I have spent seventeen hours with my seven most enchanting friends. I rose at

4 A.M. and walked slowly to Earlham, as I did not wish to disturb them too soon. I had partly made up my mind not to throw pebbles at their windows (the preconcerted signal of my arrival) till six, but I found them already risen. The morning was clear and brilliant. Rachel saw me first and knocked at the window. Then Richenda and Louisa came down, and soon all the rest except Betsy, who does not rise so soon on account of her health. After a short walk, the four were sent to the schoolroom to do their lessons. Kitty, Rachel, and I seated ourselves in the shade. I had brought 'Peregrinus Porteus' in my pocket, and read the beautiful description of the farm at Pitane, and the glowing language in which the Christian preacher enlarges on the character and manner of our Blessed Saviour: they completely enjoyed it. Rachel left Kitty and me alone together for a few moments, when we talked of her brother,<sup>1</sup> and concurred completely in our opinion of him—that he is at present very amiable and interesting, but that he is in great danger of receiving bad impressions.

"We enjoyed a charming breakfast together, Betsy having joined us, and then we went into the kitchen-garden to eat fruit. After this, we selected a shady spot on the lawn, where the whole party reclined upon a haycock, while I read to them part of my journal, omitting certain passages which avowed my attachment to Rachel. Three or four times, however, I stumbled on passages of this kind, and was obliged to interrupt myself. I am not clear whether the sharp-sighted

<sup>1</sup> John Gurney.

Rachel did not suspect the truth, but her behaviour during the rest of the day was full as kind as ever. They were all interested with my journal. 'Now we really know you,' they exclaimed, 'let us join hands and vow an eternal friendship.' This we did with rapturous feelings and glowing hearts. Rachel now read some of Henry Enfield's journal, which he regularly sends her, and Betsy read part of her journal, in which she acknowledges all her faults with the most charming candour. Finally, Kitty read part of her journal, which consisted chiefly of reflections. We talked afterwards of my visits. They thought I might come once a week, but on consideration it was agreed to limit it to once a fortnight.

"While they went to dress for dinner, I amused myself with looking over Bowyer's splendid edition of Hume's History. After dinner we went to the piano-forte, and Rachel and I practised some songs. I taught her the 'Stabat Mater,' which she much liked. We then went in the boat, and had some most interesting conversation, and after tea chose a delightful spot in the garden facing the setting sun, where Kitty read the poetry of 'The Monk,' and I 'The Deserted Village.' Then we went to the village church, where I read Gray's 'Elegy' by twilight with great effect. Kitty said, 'We will be your seven sisters.' When we got to the river-side, we again had enchanting singing, finishing by 'Poor John is dead,' and, as we returned, promised each other that any of us in danger of death should be visited by the rest. Then we extended our views beyond the grave, and enthusiastically sang till we reached the house 'In Heaven for ever

dwell.' It was with difficulty that I tore myself away after supper. It was a day ever to be remembered with transport."

But the time soon, too soon, came when Mr. Gurney was obliged to tell Mr. Pitchford that Friends had spoken to him about his being admitted as such a constant visitor at Earlham, and to beg him to relax his visits. This he did, but continued on otherwise intimate terms with the whole party till the autumn of 1798, when the friendship seems to have cooled. This was after the return of the Earlham family from a journey in which they had probably learnt more worldly wisdom, Mr. Pitchford being then twenty-seven, and Catherine, the eldest of the Earlham sisters, twenty-two.<sup>1</sup>

The influence of John Pitchford had been equally extended to Mary Anne Galton,<sup>2</sup> a young cousin of the Gurneys, who was frequently with them at Earlham, and who often said in after life that she owed, under God, the first distinct rays she received of spiritual light to Mr. Pitchford. Of this cousin, Eliza-

<sup>1</sup> After he married, John Pitchford settled at or near Bow as a manufacturing chemist. He frequently walked over with his wife to Ham House on Sunday afternoons, and was always warmly welcomed there by Samuel Gurney.

<sup>2</sup> Daughter of Samuel Galton of Birmingham, married, 1806, Mr. Lambert Schimmelpenninck.

beth Gurney says, "She was one of the most interesting and bewitching people I ever saw, and I never remember any person attracting me so strongly." Her especial friend was Catherine, but she was much beloved by the younger sisters, and imparted her great love of study to them, teaching them to make charts of the various subjects which occupied them. "On one occasion," Mary Anne Galton records in her Memoirs, "the Gurneys had all gone to Meeting, and I remained at home. In their absence, I walked up and down the gallery at Earlham, where were a great many portraits of the Bacon family, from the thirteenth century, and I began to think, 'What was the purpose of the existence of these men? Where are they now that they have passed from earth?' So, on my cousin's return, when she joined me in the gallery, I said to her, 'I am twenty, thou art twenty-five; and what is the end of our existence? I am resolved most thoroughly to examine and discover for myself if the Bible be true, and if it is,' I added in the folly and ignorance of my heart, 'I shall instantly do all that is commanded in it; and if not, I shall think no more on the subject;' and I prayed, if there were a God to hearken, that He would reveal Himself to me."

But those who care for the family story will like to re-open the journal of thirteen-year-old Richenda :—

“*Sunday, March, 1798.*—I have felt extremely uncomfortable about Betsy’s Quakerism, which I saw, to my sorrow, increasing every day. She no longer joined in our pleasant dances, and singing she seemed to give up; she dressed as plain as she could, and spoke still more so. We all feel about it alike, and are truly sorry that one of us seven should separate herself in principles, actions, and appearance from the rest. But I think we ought to try to make the best of it, and reconcile it as much as possible to our own minds. Betsy’s character is certainly, in many respects, extremely improved since she has adopted these principles. She is industrious, charitable to the poor, kind and attentive to all of us; in short, if it was not for that serious manner which Quakerism throws over a person, Betsy would indeed be a most improved character.”

“*March 11, 1798.*—We have had a long letter of advice from Betsy. I fully intend to profit by it. Almost all the advice is about our behaviour to each other, which I see and know too well is not what it should be. . . . I am determined henceforth to conquer the foolish weakness I have when Master Sammy begins to bellow, and I can hardly keep myself in patience, I am so angry with the child; and when Cilla comes forward in her pert way, and I feel the inclination to give her a good beat.”



*“March 15.*—Since I last wrote I have had a most comfortable time, and have taken greatest pains to keep up my good resolution. On Monday some young men came, and we had a most pleasant merry evening. We acted pantomimes, and Rachel was very droll. I am sure such delightful evenings do you good; they cheer the mind, and you feel the happier. I am sure pleasure carried to a certain degree does the mind good, and makes you feel better.”

*“March 16.*—I have not been so cross I don't know when as I was this morning. I totally gave way to all the impatience which I felt, but luckily my ill-humour fled when lessons were over. . . . I see more and more how impossible it is to keep your temper even with good resolutions. I often am at a loss how to act when the others come and worry me and appear to me to behave most unfairly;—whether tamely to submit or oppose them and insist on what seems to me to be right. If I act the latter part, it immediately creates a disturbance; and if I tamely submit, it seems spiritless and silly; so I must always do as appears best to me at the time.”

*“April 22.*—Betsy is come back; she has been a good deal improved by her journey; she has seen a good deal of William Savery, whose whole soul seems formed and made for true religion and perfect faith. From the workings of her own mind and her acquaintance with him, Betsy seems to be changed from a complete sceptic to a person who has entire faith in a Supreme Being and a future state, and I should suppose

she feels all the delight which such a belief must bring with it."

"*Sunday, May 7.*—Kitty and us four and the three boys had rather a pleasant improving reading. Our afternoon readings with Kitty are always the most satisfactory improving moments we spend; but how I do dislike our Sunday evenings, and I am often sorry that we spend Sunday so disagreeably and uselessly; it is really almost a sin to lose a whole day in the week, but I think it is not our own fault. My father will always have us go to Meeting once, sometimes twice a day. Then we always read of an evening, sometimes Friends' books, sometimes the Bible, but it is always in such a disagreeable way, it never does any good."

"*May 20.*—My powers of virtue are dormant, although not wicked. I am not a strong virtuous character. I wish, however, so *much* to become so, that I cannot remain long as I am. I cannot, however, expect to attain the virtue I wish for without infinite pains and the greatest perseverance. I may wish and wish for ever, and think, and say, and hope to become virtuous, and all without avail if I do not really exert myself and use all the efforts of my mind to become so."

"*May 30.*—My last expressed clearly the state of my mind after I had written it. I felt so very happy and good, and all the peace that the endeavour of acting right and a heart big with resolution to be virtuous afford. For a time I felt myself virtuous. I

longed to do everything to oblige everybody, and enjoyed giving up my own pleasures to that of others. I began the week with these sentiments, and whilst they continued to have possession of my mind I was happy; but soon I began to have a less constant guard over myself, and by the end of the week—though I cannot say I quite forgot what I had written on Sunday—I forgot it so far that it had little effect on my conduct.”

“*Sept.* 10, 1798.—Now I am at home once more (after a journey in the South of England), and feel all the comforts of this sweet place, I am determined to begin afresh with new ardour and new spirit in the endeavour of improving myself, and being, if it is possible, worthy of the many blessings and comforts which surround me. Our journey has very much humbled me in my own opinion. I have seen so many people so *extremely* superior and more delightful than myself, that I could not help often feeling my own inferiority.”

Louisa Gurney writes :—

“*Oct.* 28.—On Thursday we took our famous ass-ride. We were all dressed for the occasion, and I never laughed more than when fifteen asses arrived saddled and bridled for us. After a great deal of noise and bustle, we seven, five Barclays, John, Joseph, and Kitty Hanbury, were mounted upon fifteen capital donkeys, with various sorts of saddles. During our seven miles’ ride various changes took place in

our cavalcade. Sometimes we went all in a row, so as to form an extremely long string, now and then we went two and two, and then again we were all in a bustle. Three men followed us on foot to pick up those who fell, and indeed we had a bountiful share of falls, which added to the extreme drollery and merriment. We rode up the park with loud halloos and everything that could show the success of our ride, and the surrounding friends and neighbours were assembled to see us arrive."

"*Oct. 30.*—Hannah Judd (housekeeper) was married to John Scarnell (butler) to-day, after fifteen [years' courtship. Gatty, Rachel, Lucy, Anna, and Maria Barclay, and Elizabeth (Gurney), besides some Friends and my father, followed her into Meeting, and the whole day passed off charmingly."

"*Nov. 17.*—Kitty told us she preferred Chenda's manner to that of us three, particularly mine; indeed, by many little things I have lately felt that she prefers Chenda's character. It is foolish, but I can't help being a little hurt at this sometimes. She treats us all exactly the same, but she *admires* Chenda far the most, and so do Rachel and Betsy."

"*Nov. 22.*—How I have given way to passion to-day; I have not even tried to check myself. All bad dispositions grow on us if they are not checked, and it is time to conquer my faults. How I do love Kitty! I never saw so generous and noble a disposition."

She would give up every pleasure for another's, even pretending she does not like things in order that others may have them. However, I know her arts when, on very cold mornings, she pretends she does not like sitting near the fire, in order that others may take the warm seats, &c. There is nobody like her. It is one of my first wishes that I may never leave her as long as I live. If I should marry, I must and *will* be near her: should she marry, if it was only to be her scullion, I must go to live with her."

"*Dec. 2.*—Kitty is away, and I have been behaving very badly to Betsy, thus doing what Kitty most dislikes; but I am *determined* I will now behave in everything, particularly in kindness to Betsy, as well as I am able, till my darling Kitty comes home, for these are the things by which I can best show my love to her. I owe all the goodness I have to her, and it shall always be one of my cares to copy what she has done for me."

"*Dec. 4.*—I quarrelled with Hannah and Chenda this afternoon about their spoiling some candles. Hannah sneered, and Chenda burst into one of her provoking laughs. Her laughs are more than I can bear. I did long to pull her ears, to show that I am not so very contemptible as she seems to think me; but now I am writing my journal in a passion, so I will leave Chenda with her ears, and go to my own conduct. I do blame myself for my conduct to them. Bickering seems to be the nature of children: how I do hate it."

"*Dec. 7.*—I observe that Betsy considers the feelings

and pleasures of people *indifferent* to her, and does little things for them, and takes pains to please everybody. It is one of her most amiable qualities."

"*Dec.* 29.—Yesterday we had a great deal of company, and Mr. and Mrs. Ives, Amelia Alderson, Hannah Walker of Catton, and various others arrived first, and soon after five the Prince<sup>1</sup> with his three aides-de-camp. The dinner was most elegant. Afterwards all of us eleven, except John, went to the top of the table by Kitty and the Prince. They all sang, and when the ladies rose it was half-past eight. How late for us! We had an uncommon time in the drawing-room—very new and entertaining—till ten. Everybody looked cheerful, and we eleven stood round His Princeship, and sang the Chapter of Kings, which pleased him amazingly."

"*Dec.* 31.—I see that I have pride, and it especially shows itself among the Goat Lane girls. This morning, when we were in the little room at Goat's, in came the Aggs,<sup>2</sup> and I directly felt proud and superior to them. I went to Goat's again in the afternoon, and behaved so badly, that my father spoke to me about it. I will not give him any reason to find fault with me next Sunday."

A picture by Opie, bought by the Lord Cholmondeley of the day, and now at Hough-

<sup>1</sup> William Frederick, of Gloucester.

<sup>2</sup> Quaker cousins in Norwich.

ton, is supposed to represent Rachel and Richenda Gurney about this time, having their fortunes told by a gipsy. Opie himself was an intimate associate of the families at Earlham and Keswick. He had first met in 1797 their friend Amelia, only daughter of the well-known Dr. Alderson, who prescribed at Norwich for four or five hundred persons every week, and for the poor always free. At that time he was already married, but divorced. His appearance is described by Allan Cunningham as that of "an inspired peasant." When Amelia Alderson married him in May 1798, her chief inducement to do so was his promise that he would never separate her from the father to whom she had entirely devoted herself from the time of her mother's death, when she was fifteen.<sup>1</sup> But they were an interesting couple. Mrs. Siddons said of Opie, "When I am with him, I am always sure to hear something which I cannot forget, or at least which never ought to be forgotten." Horne Tooke said, "Opie crowds more wisdom into a few words than almost any man I ever knew;" while of his love of his art Northcote records, "Many artists paint to live, but Opie lives to paint."

<sup>1</sup> See Amelia Opie's pathetic novels, "Father and Daughter" and "Adeline Mowbray."

To the Earlham sisters, Mrs. Opie's musical talents gave her an especial charm. "She was perfect as a musician," says Mrs. S. C. Hall, according to the simple perfecting of those days, and sang with power and sweetness the songs then in vogue—"Sally in our Alley," &c. In the open Boulevards at Paris she had created the greatest sensation by singing "Fall, tyrants, fall." She would practise for hours with Rachel Gurney and her younger sisters, whom Miss Martineau describes as—

"A set of dashing young people, dressing in gay riding-habits and scarlet boots, and riding about the country to balls and gaieties of all sorts. Accomplished and charming young ladies they were, and we children used to hear whispered gossip about the effects of their charms on heart-stricken young men."

Not only the charms of its young ladies attracted all the young officers quartered at Norwich to Earlham, but the fishing and shooting which their father was always willing to bestow. For John Gurney was the most good-natured and popular of men. A strict preserver of his game, he had, however, an intense repugnance to everything bordering on poaching. Upon one occasion, when walking in his park, he heard a gun fired in a neighbouring wood. When he hurried to the spot,



his naturally placid temper was considerably ruffled on seeing a young officer, with a pheasant at his feet, deliberately loading his gun. Upon the young man replying to his rather warm expressions by a polite apology, Mr. Gurney's wrath was somewhat allayed, yet he could not refrain from asking the intruder what he would do if he caught a man trespassing upon his premises. "I would ask him to luncheon," was the reply. The serenity of this impudence was not to be resisted. Mr. Gurney not only invited the offender to luncheon, but supplied him with dogs and a gamekeeper, and secured him excellent sport for the remainder of the day.<sup>1</sup>

It was in this year that the American Friend, William Savery, came to Norwich on a mission. The diary of the young Roman Catholic, John Pitchford, describes his going to hear him :—

"*Feb. 7, 1798.*—In the evening I went to the Quakers' Meeting. As there was a great crowd and no room to sit down, I placed myself on the staircase, but Mr. Joseph Gurney soon beckoned me thence, and placed me amongst the preachers, one of whom, when the sermon and prayer were finished, shook me by the hand, which I believe is their mode of announcing the

<sup>1</sup> See Memoir of Sir T. F. Buxton.

conclusion of a Meeting. The name of the speaker was Savery, and his sermon the best I have ever heard among Quakers, so full of candour and liberality. My only objection to it was its excessive length—two hours and a half.”

On his first visit to Norwich, William Savery was much astonished at the worldly appearance of the Quakers there. He speaks of it in his printed journal, describing a Norwich Meeting of February 4, 1798 :—

“There were about two hundred under our name, very few middle-aged. I thought it the gayest meeting of Friends I ever sat in, and was grieved at it. . . . The marks of wealth and grandeur are too obvious in several families of Friends in this place.”

Betsy—Elizabeth Gurney—the third in age, had hitherto been the gayest and the brightest of the Earlham sisterhood. She was the one who most enjoyed dancing, and who had always an innocent pleasure in the admiration she excited. But her sisters’ journals record how one day—it was on the 4th of February 1798—when she was in her twentieth year, the whole family went to the Meeting at “Goat’s.” The seven sisters sat in a row in front of the gallery. Betsy had on a pair of new “purple boots, laced with scarlet.” They were a perfect delight to her ;

she intended to console herself with them for the oppressive dulness she expected. Hitherto she had often been excused from "Goat's" as her health was less strong than that of her sisters, but her Uncle Joseph, in whom the Quaker spirit was stronger than in her father, had urged that she ought to make an effort to attend, and had induced John Gurney to insist upon it. So, most unwillingly, she had gone. On this occasion, however, a strange minister was present; it was the American "Friend" William Savery.

"At last," says Richenda, "he began to preach. His voice and manner were arresting, and we all liked the sound, but Betsy's attention became fixed, and at last I saw her begin to weep, and she became a good deal agitated. As soon as Meeting was over, she made her way to the men's side of the Meeting, and having found my father, she asked him if she might dine at the Grove, our Uncle Joseph's, where William Savery was staying. He consented, though rather surprised by the request. We others went home as usual, and, for a wonder, we wished to go again in the afternoon. As we returned in the carriage, Betsy sat in the middle, and astonished us all by weeping most of the way home. The next morning William Savery came to breakfast, and preached afterwards to our sisters, prophesying a high and important calling into which she would be led."

From that day Betsy's love of pleasure and the world seemed gone. She began to lead a life apart from the rest of the family, gradually but firmly withdrawing herself more and more from its daily interests and occupations.

By the little Richenda, for whom life still sparkled with innocent enjoyment, this change in Betsy was bitterly felt. It kept her awake with grief and annoyance.

"At length," she writes, "I felt I ought to tell her openly what my feelings were, and when we went to bed together, I openly told her my mind, and how I disliked the change which I saw was taking place in her, and I asked her what influenced her to it. She told me she felt it was her duty to be a Quaker; she was certain she acted from reason, and not from enthusiasm, and that she had felt far happier since she had adopted the principles of Quakers than she had ever done before. She said she knew it was her path to tread in; that every one has a different path to follow. 'To some,' she said, 'drawing and singing may be innocent and pure amusements; to me they are not, therefore I give them up.' This has taught me how necessary it is to bear with patience the sentiments of others when they differ from your own."

Catherine Gurney writes—

"I have a clear picture of Betsy's appearance at this time. It was peculiarly lovely. Her fine flaxen hair was

combed simply behind and parted in front. Her white gown plainly fitted her figure, which was beautifully proportioned. I remember her sitting on the window-seat in what we then called the blue room, with her feet up, in deep meditation. It appears curious to have her form so written on my memory. But a change became daily more evident in her, and appeared more and more as a reality, though at that time we could not in the least understand it, and it was a very great cross to me. I now see how much the expression of our feeling must have added to her difficulty. When she told me she could not dance with us any more (which was at that time my greatest delight), it was almost more than I could bear, and I tried to argue with her, and begged and persecuted her. But it was all in vain. The firmness of her character was called into play, and I never remember her to have been shaken in one single point which she felt to be her duty. The Bible became her study, visiting the poor, especially the sick, her great object. We were too ignorant ourselves to know what the workings of her mind were, but we could discover the most marked change in her. To us (who were tried by many things in her which were great crosses to us) she was now always amiable and patient, forbearing and humble. And, in looking back upon the change in her life and its great results, we may feel assured that God was at work in her soul, and that she was at that time really and truly awakening to a new life in Christ Jesus, and called to a most important service. Yet it was after she had received these powerful impressions that, with my father's consent, she went to London, literally to

see the world, being determined to prove all things, and hold fast that which was good."

The request which Betsy—Elizabeth Gurney—made at this time to her father, astonished her sisters more than anything else. She begged that she might be allowed to visit London and examine for herself into all the fascinations and amusements of the world, before she left it. And to London, under the care of Mrs. Hanbury, she was sent. She "tasted London," as she called it, had dancing lessons in the mornings, concerts and parties in the afternoons, the theatre in the evenings, and balls at night.

But the result was, that when she came home, she was quite decided as to the course she meant to follow. The narrowest way of religion was chosen, and what are sometimes called the pleasures of the world—literature, music, science, cheerful companionship—renounced for ever. With Quaker principles she began to adopt Quaker peculiarities, at first with a pertinacity which was most trying to her sisters. The discussions, however, which followed had perhaps the effect of leading them also to consider the subject as they would not otherwise have done. As a proof of her

exaggerated religious enthusiasm at this time, it is remembered that she even refused to look at the picture which Opie was painting of her own father, though she pained him by doing so, and in many other ways—most annoying to those around—her judgment was at this time blunted by shackles from which she was afterwards emancipated.

## IV

### CHANGES

“And the sign shall be mercifully given to the doubt of love which shall be refused to the doubt of indifference.”—ROBERTSON.

“Truth, which doth only judge itself, teacheth that the inquiry of truth, which is the love-making or wooing of it, the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature.”—BACON.

PARTLY in the hope of giving a more wholesome and natural tone to the thoughts of Betsy, Mr. Gurney took all his seven daughters for a tour through England and Wales in the summer of 1798. In Colnbrook Dale, he purposely left Betsy alone for some days with her cousin, Priscilla Hannah Gurney, a very sensible and practical person, though a confirmed Quaker.

“She was exactly the person to attract the young: she possessed singular beauty and elegance of manner. She was of the old school; her costume partook of this, and her long retention of the black hood gave much character to her appearance.”

During this journey Elizabeth was much



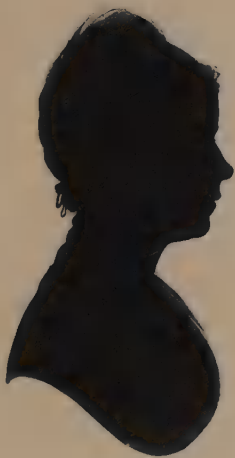
impressed by the prediction of one Deborah Darby, an aged Friend, who told her that she would be "a light to the blind, speech to the dumb, and feet to the lame." "Can it be? She almost seems as if she thought I was to be a minister of Christ. Can I ever be one?" wrote Elizabeth Gurney in her journal.

After the return of the family to Earlham, one day, in walking up the park, Betsy Gurney fell in with a girl about her own age—Molly Norman by name—carrying a bag of flour. She talked to the girl, and asked her what she thought it cost to clothe her. The girl replied, she thought it cost ten shillings a year. Upon which Betsy obtained her father's consent to adopt this girl. She was admitted into the house, and became her entire charge, pupil, and attendant. This was the first of her direct labours for others. But she soon enlarged her views, and having obtained use of the laundry for the purpose, she collected twice a week all the children from the neighbouring villages. The numbers soon amounted to seventy or more, and they acquired the name of "Betsy's Imps." She had no master or mistress for them, and, of course, none of the helps of books, boards, and pictures of the present day, so that it is wonderful how she succeeded in

keeping any order, or imparting any instruction to such an undisciplined troop. She did, however, produce a decided effect upon them, and her memory is still regarded with gratitude and affection by the children of her pupils. This was the beginning of the Sunday-school which was very long kept up at Earlham in a many-sided chamber at the top of the house. The next step was establishing a little day-school—"Nobbs"—of six girls at Norwich, whence some of the best servants and most faithful friends of families in that neighbourhood have emerged, and showed from the first that a blessing rested upon her labours.<sup>1</sup>

Still Elizabeth Gurney was not satisfied. She felt that her home life, even with all the fresh interests of her school, left a blank to her. She became filled with the morbid fancies which those who perpetually hunt for sins learn to indulge in. She longed to wear a more distinct outward badge of service to the Master she had chosen. She pined for a thornier path. To begin with, she announced to her father, who received it with great pain and distress, that she must become "a plain Quaker," which implied a very different life to that to which her family was accustomed.

<sup>1</sup> From notes by Priscilla Buxton, Mrs. Johnston.



*Elizabeth Gurney*  
*of Epsom*



There must never be any further risk of her attention wandering during Meeting to such a vanity as purple boots. Dress must henceforward be only a covering, not an adornment. She adopted the Quaker costume in its most exaggerated form. She reasoned perpetually with her sisters to persuade them to flee from such temptations—for thus she considered them—as music and dancing. Her position at home became daily more difficult—almost untenable.<sup>1</sup>

Among the younger John Gurney's school-fellows at Wandsworth had been a boy named Joseph Fry, who was of an old family, which took its name from Frie in Normandy. He was afterwards placed with Robert Holmes, a "Friend," in Norfolk, to learn farming, but chiefly spent his time in coursing and other country pursuits, which led to his introduction to the Gurney family. In education, and in cultivation of his natural talents, especially for music, he was their superior. But their singular charms both of mind and person, their joyous freedom and general circumstances, delighted the young Londoner, whose heart was soon especially

<sup>1</sup> From this time she always entered or dated the months in the Quaker fashion, as "7th day, 4th mo. 1799." The usual form is preserved here for convenience in these volumes, but is not that used in the original letters.

touched by Betsy. It was in an evening walk beyond the bounds of the park, towards the village of Colney, that he first became fully conscious of his feelings towards her. It is remembered that she was dressed that evening in a brown silk gown, with a black lace veil wound round her head like a turban, the ends pendant on one side of her face and contrasting with her beautiful light-brown hair.

Joseph Fry first proposed to Elizabeth Gurney in July 1799, when he was unhesitatingly refused. He could not, however, be induced to relinquish her, though Mr. Gurney wrote many wise and kind letters to discourage his further attentions, such as that of—

“*March* 16, 1800.—I can do no less than recommend thee, at least for the present, to waive all thoughts of a visit to Earlham. I am of opinion it is in no respect likely to further thy wishes, and if so, then it must have a contrary effect, because it must call upon Betsy, if she cannot return thy affection for her, to take a line of absolute prohibition as to casual intercourse. She will have to consider that young women suffer a disadvantage in character when there shall be any appearance of allowing a young man to remain in the character of a suitor when there is no inclination or intention to give a future encouragement. . . . For myself, I am vastly at a loss how to act, for unless thou couldst summon resolution to relinquish thy

views towards her, I feel it a hardship upon thee to have her in the neighbourhood without holding intercourse; and with the sentiments which I am aware she holds, I could not think an intercourse could be allowed with satisfaction to thee, or propriety as to herself."

Joseph Fry and Elizabeth Gurney, however, continued occasionally to meet at "Cousin Hoare's" and other places. On their return from London in the spring of 1800, Mr. Gurney, with his daughters Kitty and Rachel, were invited to visit the Fry parents at Plashet, and returned full of their kindness, and in the following May Elizabeth was induced to send Joseph Fry a note containing expressions of friendliness. But she was terrified when she found that this immediately brought him to Earlham, determined to obtain a definite promise or refusal. The Gurney family were divided about him. He was supposed to be a rich man, and he had a good house in the City of London, in St. Mildred's Court, near his place of business. He was a remarkably good linguist and sang splendidly. He bore the highest character for probity, sagacity, and benevolence. Above all, he belonged to a family of "plain Quakers," the sect to which Betsy had so firmly announced her intention

of uniting herself. And yet his appearance was greatly against him, and his manners were considered by the Earlham sisters to be most uncaptivating.

By Mr. Gurney himself, Joseph Fry's suit was now well received. The motherly heart of Catherine—Mrs. Catherine she now began to be called—ached for her sister, and yet she thought that such a marriage might afford her all she sought for the present, and that the home duties it would impose would gradually wean her from the exaggerations into which she perceived her to be drifting at Earlham. The gentle Rachel wept constantly, because she thought, against her natural inclination, that the proposal should be accepted. Richenda, Louisa, and Priscilla expended reams of closely covered paper in written prayers that Betsy might be helped through her difficulties, and guided to do what was best (though they had great doubts whether this was best) for her eternal welfare. Hannah tells in her journal how she cried all night because she thought that the marriage must be.

Mr. Fry had no intention of exposing himself to the possibility of a refusal. He bought a very handsome gold watch and chain, and laid it down upon a white seat—the white seat



which still exists—in the garden at Earlham. “If Betsy takes up that watch,” he said, “it is a sign that she accepts me : if she does not take it up by a particular hour, it will show that I must leave Earlham.” The six sisters concealed themselves in six laurel-bushes in different parts of the grounds to watch. One can imagine their intense curiosity and anxiety. At last the tall, graceful Betsy, her flaxen hair now hidden under a Quaker cap, shyly emerged upon the gravel walk. She seemed scarcely conscious of her surroundings, as if, “on the wings of prayer, she was being wafted into the unseen.” But she reached the garden seat, and there, in the sunshine, lay the glittering new watch. The sight of it recalled her to earth. She could not, could not, take it, and fled swiftly back to the house.

But the six sisters remained in their laurel-bushes. They felt sure she would revoke, and they did not watch in vain. An hour elapsed, in which her father urged her, and in which conscience seemed to drag her forwards. Once again did the anxious sisters see Betsy emerge from the house, with more faltering steps this time, but still inwardly praying, and slowly, tremblingly, they saw her take up the watch, and the deed was done. She never afterwards regretted

it, though it was a bitter pang to her when she collected her eighty-six children in the garden at Earlham and bade them farewell, and though she wrote in her journal as a bride, "I cried heartily on leaving Norwich ; the very stones in the street were dear to me." She could be a "plain Quaker" now without displeasing any one. Her future husband had promised never to hinder, but rather to aid, her efforts after the higher life which is hidden in Christ. She trusted to the integrity of his nature to keep his vow, and she did not trust in vain.

Betsy was also to be separated as little as possible from her family. It was promised that she should pay long annual visits to Earlham : one or other of her sisters was to be frequently with her in London. Her young brother Samuel—from childhood rather devoted to horses and farm interests than literature, but now about to start in business and be articled to her husband—was to be a constant inmate of her house in St. Mildred's Court, in the heart of the City, where she could watch over his moral and spiritual, as well as his physical well-being. At fourteen he was to be employed in the book-keeping department and in the money affairs of his brother-in-law's house of business, and into these he threw himself with the same

heartiness and whole-mindedness which characterised all he did, and which constituted his success in after life.<sup>1</sup>

Rachel and Hannah were at St. Mildred's Court with Elizabeth Fry when her first child—Katherine—was born. Their seventeen-year-old sister Louisa wrote to them from Earlham :—

"*August 24, 1801.*—Dearest Rachel and Hannah, I don't think I can write much to you, I feel almost too interested about the delightful news. . . . After Meeting yesterday, we went into the market-place to wait for letters, and there—between great fear and great joy—Kitty read that the darling girl was born. I longed to fly out of the coach and tell everybody that knew us the news. Then we went round to tell Hannah Scarnell. . . . How I do long to see it! I think thee (Rachel) must feel so satisfied in having been with Betsy through it all, and I hope it has not been too much for thee or Hannah. What Hannah must have felt when she heard the sweet cries of the child! I long to hear far more—how dearest Betsy spends every hour, and what she says, and what she feels, and how you all do, now you have reaped the fruit of such pain as you must have gone through."

A little later Richenda wrote from Earlham to Hannah at St. Mildred's Court :—

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<sup>1</sup> See Memoirs of Samuel Gurney, by Mrs. Thomas Geldart.  
VOL. I.

"*Sept.* 1801.—We go on very comfortably with all our visitors, but so soberly and quietly, that really I have no news to tell thee. We spend our days as busily as possible. At six we get up, and every other morning I read 'Newton on the Prophecies,' which I like much better than any book of the sort I ever read. When we have all walked in the garden after breakfast, we separate and go into our different rooms, and scarcely see anything of one another all the morning. But fixing the plan of practising takes a considerable time. The instrument hardly ever ceases for five minutes. I have, besides my own practising, to sing with Cilla (Priscilla) half-an-hour, sing with Gatty (Agatha Barclay) half-an-hour, and also with Anna Buxton. . . . We generally walk for an hour in the afternoon, oftener to the Scarnells than anywhere else. All the evening Rachel (Barclay), Anna Buxton, and I read Tasso, which I constantly admire more. . . . Almost the only reason I dislike having people in the house is that I see less of Kitty. There is no one who does me so much good. I think she is quite a pattern to all young people."

Only a few weeks after this letter was written, the Earlham family gathered on the steps of the hall-door to watch a travelling carriage approaching up the lime avenue. It contained Rachel, Hannah, and Betsy, with "the darling baby." Eager to display the treasure, no sooner was the carriage-door opened, than Hannah sprang out with the

baby in her arms, and wondered who the tall, and to her unknown, boy could be, standing amongst the group. That boy was Thomas Fowell Buxton, her future husband, who looked on her then for the first time, and said at once in his large strong heart: "She shall be my wife."<sup>1</sup>

In the following year Fowell Buxton formed one of the party when Mr. Gurney took his six unmarried daughters and his son Samuel to the Lakes, with Mr. Crome (Old Crome) as their drawing-master.

HANNAH GURNEY to ELIZABETH FRY.

"*Ambleside*, 1802.—To-day we could not get out till rather late on account of the weather, which none of us minded, as we were all busily employed in drawing, Kitty reading to us. Chenda, Cilla, and Mr. Crome were comfortably seated in a romantic little summer-house, painting a beautiful waterfall. Priscilla Lloyd<sup>1</sup> was with us, as she has frequently been since we came here. Fowell and Sam have been shooting, and have been very successful. We generally get up early and draw for the first two or three hours in the morning before we set out on our excursions, which are mostly walking ones, as we like it far better than riding in this delightful country. Nothing,

<sup>1</sup> Seventy years after, Hannah, Lady Buxton, told this to her niece, Katherine Fry, who was then "the baby."

<sup>2</sup> Who afterwards married Dr. Wordsworth, Master of Trinity.

I think, have we been so delighted with as Grasmere. We three, Fowell and Sam, had a very pleasant and droll ride home in a countryman's cart, which passed us on our return to Ambleside, after we had been climbing up a hill at Grasmere, and walking a long way when there. We are all, even Kitty, capital walkers. Plans are rather a stumbling-block to the family's good minds, but after a rough hour or two, calm ensues, and good minds reappear."

It was well for Rachel Gurney that she had something at this time which demanded her attention, and which could sometimes withdraw her mind from dwelling on its own sorrows. The Enfield family, who had formerly been the dearest friends of all the Earham sisters, were still under sentence of exile. The separation lasted three years. All the sisters had felt it, but to Rachel it had been a bitter trial. During the interval, however—partly through the influence of young Mr. Pitchford, but more perhaps as an effect of the trial itself—her mind had undergone a great change on religious subjects, and though her knowledge of them was obscure, she had begun to seek consolation in a form which she would have joined Henry Enfield in ridiculing a few years before. It had been promised that she was to see him again when she should be twenty-

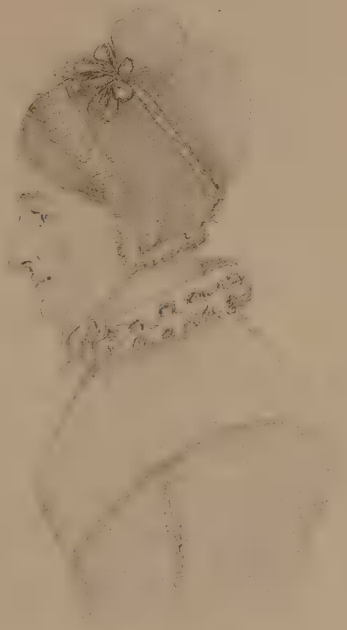
one, in November 1799, and with the most intense anxiety she had looked forward to the interview which would decide her lot in life. As the time approached, she wrote to beg him to give her full notice before their meeting. But he did not do this, and on the very day his probation was ended he unexpectedly appeared at Earlham. Rachel and Henry Enfield were shut up together for a long time. She scarcely spoke afterwards of what had passed between them, but when he came out, he went away without seeing any other member of the family. The unsympathetic pride with which he had scorned the change in her feelings had pained Rachel bitterly. Henry Enfield had parted with her coldly; nothing was then said as to the future.

Rachel was left in a state of the most extreme disappointment and distress, and as day after day passed by, and she heard nothing, Mr. Gurney's tender heart was moved, till at last he began to wish to bring about the union with Henry Enfield which he had opposed so long. But then a strange report came to Earlham that he was engaged to some one else. Mr. Gurney sent his faithful servant Scarnell to Nottingham, where the Enfields lived, to gather information, and find out if the report was true; if not,

to tell young Enfield that all his opposition was withdrawn. But the report was perfectly true ; Henry Enfield was not only engaged, but was already married to another. From that day Rachel's spirits were broken and her beauty faded. Long afterwards Mrs. Catherine Gurney wrote :—

“ Rachel's grief was most bitter, and she was long in a state of great depression, but by degrees her fine vigorous nature, aided by the increasing sense of the power of religion, prevailed over her senses, and her mind and affections were turned to other objects. She did indeed work her way through many clouds of sorrow and much darkness, with few outward helps, but the diligence of her mind being once directed to attaining a resting-place in religion, she gradually became established in the habit of daily reading in the Scriptures, and of a measure of religious retirement. Her diligence in duty, however, her remarkable cultivation of the gift of serving others that was in her, was apparently one of the principal means of leading her into higher light, and opening to her that rich field of Christian experience and consolation to which she was afterwards so abundantly admitted. Through all her own conflicts, she never forgot others, she was most disinterested in her services, and judicious and effective in the help she gave. Her sympathies were most lively and affectionate, and under any trouble she was the greatest comfort to all the family, and to her brothers, especially Joseph and Daniel, the most vigilant of sisters.”





Rachel Gurney

from M<sup>rs</sup> O'Neil



Meantime the religious movement amongst the Earlham sisters continued. They were all still nominally Friends, but the degree of their Quakerism was very fluctuating and uncertain, and varied according to circumstances. The marriage of their cousin and intimate friend Margaret Lindoc with William Jones, the Rector of Clare, in Suffolk, now also, when they went to stay with her, made them for the first time really acquainted with English Church principles. In proportion, however, as the sisters were impressed with the seriousness and importance of religious subjects, they began to be perplexed and uneasy as to their own religious situation, and their great uncertainty as to Gospel truth. This was especially the case with Catherine and with Rachel, in whom religious perplexities made a sad additional trouble to that of her disappointed affection.<sup>1</sup> The younger sisters, according to their age and character, reflected more or less the spiritual condition of their elders. Louisa was of the most thoughtful turn, and in consequence she felt the most. Her ardent disposition was very strongly affected by the changes which seemed to be taking place in the character

<sup>1</sup> John Pitchford, who had been long so devotedly attached to her, had proposed to Rachel Gurney after he knew that her engagement to Henry Enfield was at an end, but entirely without success.

of her elders, though the other three younger sisters still continued to enjoy the pleasures of their youth, without very much thought of the future.

Catherine Gurney writes :—

“As for myself, I was working my way through much obscurity, and difficulty, and discouragement, or rather it was worked out for me, and I can best describe my experience by Prov. xx. 24—‘A man’s goings are of the Lord: how then can he understand his own way?’ I read and I thought, and I was very grave, and my mind was deeply occupied by religious subjects. I had very little taste or inclination for anything else. I loved at that time some speculative metaphysical books. Tucker’s ‘Light of Nature’ used to delight me, and was, in many respects, very useful to me. I cannot enumerate all the books that occupied me in succession, but, above all, Butler was the turning-point, and on my mind the most influential of anything I ever read. It has had a very strong and permanent influence on my mode in religion, if I may so express it, and I trace to it many things in myself which might appear to have no connection with this kind of foundation-work. My own sense of it is that I have always had more sound and comprehensive views of religion, even in subordinate points, from my study of Butler. Afterwards I came to Pearson and parts of Hooker, which confirmed all that had gone before. But these I did not read till after I knew Dr. Wordsworth. Our acquaintance with him began soon after his marriage with Priscilla Lloyd. Having the

living of Oby near Norwich, he came to take possession of it, and was invited by my father to Earlham, owing to his wife being a relation of some of our family. At the time of the Wordsworths' first visit, both Rachel and I were absent: she was with Betsy and I was staying with Mary Anne Galton<sup>1</sup> at Bath. She was lodged and boarded in a Moravian family, and I was accommodated there with her. This also proved of importance to me, and as my mind was then all alive and open to Scripture truth, I gained much light from the Moravians on the subject of the Atonement and justification by faith, which I had understood most obscurely before. Greatly in the dark as I had been about these fundamental truths, I delighted in this accession to my religious knowledge and happiness, and, when I left Bath and stayed for a short time with Betsy at St. Mildred's Court, I was most earnest to go to old Newton's church<sup>2</sup> and hear him preach, as his writings had fallen into my hands, and fed me just in the way I wanted. Accordingly I went one evening and heard a most touching sermon from Isaiah liii. I never can forget the enjoyment and encouragement of that evening, and the delight of the whole church service on that occasion. It was what I wanted. But there it ended for a long time.

"On returning to Earlham, I found the sisters who had been left at home greatly pleased with their new acquaintances the Wordsworths, and Rachel and I soon shared the enjoyment. They were highly pleasing, and our connection with them was another influential link

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Mrs. Schimmelpenninck.

<sup>2</sup> St. Mary Woolnoth.

in the chain of our religious history. I remember the pleasure and the instruction of Dr. Wordsworth's family reading and prayers, and he told me of books to read, especially Pearson, Leighton, Barrow, parts of Hooker, and others: so I was thoroughly set to work. But he never talked about the Church, or any secondary point, that I can recollect, in our whole intercourse, till I, some years afterwards, applied to him for information. I did not then care about the Church, but only about getting hold of the Truth that I wanted to make me happy, and for this I cared far more than for anything else in the world."

After Mrs. Catherine's death, in an old edition of Butler's "Analogy" belonging to her was found written:—

"My first recollection of this valuable old book is seeing my mother reading it in her early morning walks on the Earlham lawn at the top of the little hill, just opposite the south windows.

"I don't remember that she ever mentioned or recommended it to me, but several years afterwards, when she was no more, and I was groping my way to find the truth, and read many books in search of it, and had been greatly perplexed 'by philosophy and vain deceit,' I was led to take up Butler, which immediately fastened me. My inquiring mind was met by his just and comprehensive view of the Truth of Religion. I was fully convinced, and my future course became decided.

"I no longer 'stumbled on the dark mountains' of

error, but, as I became intimately acquainted with the great principles so admirably unfolded in the work, my happiness increased, and I experienced the security and comfort of resting on the Truth of Religion. Though my sentiments in many important points were in great obscurity, the foundation was laid, and, by the grace of God and the succession of providential events, the superstructure was gradually raised.

"I read Butler over and over again, and always with profit, so that I have always considered it as one of the marked providences of my life that I was first instructed by so sound and comprehensive a writer: it has proved so great an advantage to me through life.

"Then, from my recommendation, the other members of my family took to it, especially Louisa and Joseph. He profited greatly by it, and infused much of its spirit into some of his own writings."

All this time the great intimacy, which has never since been relaxed, was drawing closer between the families of Gurney and Buxton. Mrs. Buxton, a sister of Mrs. Gurney of Keswick, had been left a widow with five children, and lived principally at Earl's Colne in Essex, and occasionally at Weymouth. A kind-hearted, original-minded person, of strong will and intellect, she had taken a peculiar line in the education of her children, setting the highest possible standard before them, but leaving them the fullest liberty of independent action — a

method calculated to form character of unusual decision, as was proved by the result in mature life. Mrs. Buxton, who had become acquainted with the Gurneys of Earlham during visits to her sister at Keswick, now lost no opportunity of promoting family intercourse, and, with her three elder children—Anna, Fowell, and Charles—accompanied the family from Earlham on a tour in Wales. During this journey a close friendship began between all the younger members of the Gurney and Buxton families, and it was soon after this that Fowell Buxton began to show the especial devotion to Hannah Gurney which, begun at first sight, increased with time and intimacy. His intense love for her became henceforward a stimulus in all his pursuits. He pursued university honours like a knight pursuing a victor's crown that he might lay it at his lady's feet, and at Dublin University he obtained the utmost distinction. But to all the brothers and sisters at Earlham he was as one of themselves, and all alike watched his career with eager interest. Rachel especially regarded him with the same maternal interest which she gave to her own brothers, while with Joseph John he formed the closest friendship. Before he left college, he was permitted to engage himself to Hannah Gurney, though they were not



allowed to marry till many months after he had finished his career there.

"He was indeed a most noble youth," writes Catherine Gurney, "full of well-directed ambition, and gifted with uncommon energy and perseverance in the right use of his talents. Both nature and education formed him to be a great character, peculiarly fitted to move in public life, and accomplish the difficult and important objects to which he was afterwards called in a remarkable manner."

While not actually Friends, the religious training of the Buxtons had been not unlike that of the Gurneys, as their mother, when they were very young, had often taken them to Meeting with her, though their habits and society were more of the nature which might be called "worldly," especially when they were living at Weymouth.

ELIZABETH FRY to HANNAH GURNEY.

"*Jan. 1, 1803.*—I do hope and believe that through all we shall feel the interest of our own family one of the first interests we have. I often, very often, think of you all, and love you with fresh warmth, and dream of you of a night. If our affections may not so frequently be drawn forth towards each other, yet if they still exist, we shall find them equally warm when we are again thrown together."

*To the Same.*

"1803.—It does not appear to be in our power to feel our many blessings as we ought. But I think we cannot help feeling gratitude for the power itself of giving thanks. Do not be surprised at fluctuating feelings when mentally and bodily in weak health, which also brings hours of tranquillity and peace not often enjoyed at other times."

It was in the year 1803, in which his father became a partner in the Norwich Bank, that Joseph John Gurney first left home to go to a tutor at Oxford, fortified by a long letter of detailed advice from his sister Catherine, who much dreaded his being "led away" when she was not at hand to look after him. Hannah Gurney writes on this occasion to Elizabeth Fry:—

"*Cromer, Sept. 3, 1803.*—I have truly felt Joseph's leaving us, and his delightful behaviour before we parted makes him a still greater loss. I never saw any one behave so sweetly as he did to us all. But as he must go, it is no use to give way to regret. I do not the least wonder at Kitty's feeling it as she does, but it seems to have cast a gloom over her, and she suffers it to affect her spirits in a way undesirable to herself and others."

A picture of the summer family life at Cromer, much like that of the present day, is given in the following letter:—

RICHENDA GURNEY to ELIZABETH FRY.

"*Cromer, Sept. 8, 1803.*—Our party is now complete, as John continues with us, and the Buxtons arrived yesterday; it was extremely pleasant to us, seeing them both again, particularly Fowell; their being here will add very much to our pleasure, as there is a suitableness between us and the Buxtons, which always



CROMER.

makes it pleasant for us to be together. Our time here is spent in a way that exactly suits the place and the party. All are left in perfect liberty to do as they like all day, or to form any engagement. Yet the party is so connected that hardly a day passes but some plan is fixed for us all to meet. When all are met it is an uncommonly pretty sight, such a number of young

women, and so many, if not pretty, very nice-looking. I wish thee could have seen us the other afternoon. Sally gave a grand entertainment at the Hall, where everybody met—the ladies almost all dressed in white gowns and blue sashes, with nothing on their heads: after dinner we all stood on a wall, eighteen of us, and it really was one of the prettiest sights I ever saw.

“To give thee an idea how we are going on, I will tell thee how we generally pass the day. The weather since we came has on the whole been very fine, so imagine us before breakfast, with our troutbecks (hats) on and coloured gowns, running in all directions on the sands, jetty, &c. After breakfast we receive callers from the other houses, and fix with them the plans for the day; after this we now and then get an hour’s quiet for reading and writing, though my mind has been so much taken up with other things, that I have found it almost impossible to apply to anything seriously. At eleven we go down in numbers to bathe and enjoy the sands, which about that time look beautiful: most of our party and the rest of Cromer company come down, and bring a number of different carriages, which have a very pretty effect. After bathing, we either ride on horseback or take some pleasant excursion or other. I never remember enjoying the sea so much, and never liked Cromer a quarter so well. Some of us continually dine out, whilst the others receive company at home. We always dine in the kitchen; Nurse is our cook, and makes a very good one. We have short afternoons, and spend the evening with music, or something of that sort: with all these and other delightful

amusements, and this pleasant party, it would be very odd if we did not enjoy ourselves.

“John has been a great addition to our party. I hope he has enjoyed himself; we have had two or three most merry days since he came. The day before yesterday we spent at Sherringham, wandering about the woods, and sketching all the morning. Every one met at a beautiful spot for dinner, with three knives and forks and two or three plates between twenty-six people. All manner of games took place after dinner, which John completely entered into and seemed to enjoy as much as any of the party. We completed our day by a delightful musical evening. Miss Gordon, our old Cromer friend, came to tea : she played and sang to us all evening in a wonderful style. John goes away on Sunday ; he stays over to-night to be at a dance which some very agreeable people who are at Cromer, Mr. and Mrs. Windham, are going to give, and which I think must be very pleasant. I don’t know whether I have not enjoyed being here more than any of us, for in such a party as this strong health and spirits are really necessary to be able to enjoy it.

“It seems a long time since we heard anything of thee. I have often and often thought of thee and thy darlings, and longed to hear more of thy proceedings.”

RICHENDA GURNEY to JOSEPH JOHN, *at his Oxford Tutor's*.

“*Earlham, October 1803.*—We have passed this week comfortably and pleasantly, and have been very industrious, reading, drawing, &c. We have been up every morning before six, except Saturday, having plenty of time to ourselves before breakfast, which I

think gives us a stimulus for the rest of the day. We have a fire in the nursery before breakfast, and we four, and sometimes Anna Buxton, assemble round it wrapped up in greatcoats and red cloaks, and make quite a picturesque group."

Whilst the younger members of the family were thus amusing themselves, Mr. Gurney was becoming filled with the gravest anxieties, by the French war, the mustering of the volunteer regiments, and the apprehension of the French landing on the coast of Norfolk. He ordered that four carriages should be kept constantly ready at Earlham to start for the Isle of Ely at a moment's notice.

PRISCILLA GURNEY to ELIZABETH FRY.

"*Earlham, November 14, 1803.*—My father is going to Lynn this afternoon. From Lynn he will continue his journey to Liverpool, and, I suppose, will not return for a fortnight. I think we shall be in a very unprotected state if the French should land whilst my father is away, without a single man, or even boy, to take care of us. We had quite a serious conference about it yesterday morning: thee would have been entertained to have heard the various plans that were proposed. It is, however, now finally settled that as soon as ever we hear the news of their arrival, we six (the six sisters), Danny, and Nurse, and, if we can manage it, Molly and Anne, are immediately to set off in the coach-and-four for Ely, where we are to take up our abode, as my father

thinks it is a very safe place, being so completely surrounded by marshes. I hope, as soon as ever you hear of the French being landed in Norfolk, that you will imagine us setting off post-haste for Ely. Mrs. Freeman is to stay to take care of the house, as it will be necessary for somebody to be here. My father intends to write down directions for every individual of the family, so that there may be no confusion or bustle whenever the moment of danger arrives, if it ever does arrive."

During this time, Mrs. Fry had become increasingly established in her life in St. Mildred's Court, where her husband Joseph (youngest son of William Storrs Fry) was a partner in his father's house of business. That father, a very strict Quaker, lived in a handsome country-house at Plashet in Essex, and both there and at St. Mildred's Court the Fry family kept open house for all who belonged to the denomination of "Friends." Many of the clerks, both of the banking-house and the tea business, which Mr. Fry had united with it, lodged in the house in St. Mildred's Court. Children were born there in rapid succession, repeating, in their names, those of the sisters in Norfolk, and in the same order; but the ever-increasing claims of her large household never prevented Mrs. Fry from keeping up an intimate correspondence with her sisters at

Earlham, to which also she never failed to pay long annual visits. Her sisters were also very frequently with her in London. Rachel was greatly troubled in her early visits by the distractions of a town life, but quieted herself with this text, which simplified everything, "What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, O man, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

To the young Samuel Gurney, the life of the counting-house and the residence with his sister Elizabeth in St. Mildred's Court had proved equally a complete success. Katherine Fry wrote long afterwards :—

"He took to business and liked it; in the counting-house, as well as in domestic life, he was extremely reliable and cheerful, and was liked and beloved by the whole establishment.

"When at work, he was thoroughly industrious, and though no one more enjoyed to break off from it for a drive into the country with my father, or to get up a game of cricket in the fields at Plashet; yet in the evening, on returning to town, he would cheerfully go down after supper into the counting-house, and call over the books for an hour or two. He was popular everywhere, and the family were seldom invited to any friend's house without being requested to bring Samuel Gurney with them.

"During all his intercourse with him in youth, man-



hood, and age, my father never remembered to have heard an improper word from his lips, or an expression that he would wish recalled; nor did he ever recollect detecting or suspecting him of an untruth. He was candid, manly, and virtuous. Although not brought up in strict conformity to the costume or speech of the Society of Friends, he showed no propensity to follow fashions or gaiety of appearance, beyond a respectable and suitable neatness in his attire. He was, in other words, superior to the follies and frivolities so prevalent with young men of the world."

PRISCILLA to HANNAH GURNEY.

"*St. Mildred's Court, Feb. 1803.*—I think I never knew Sam in so sweet a mind as he is in now: it is quite delightful to be with him. His present situation seems completely to suit his taste, and he shines in it more than he has ever done before. His partiality for Mildred's Court and Joseph and Betsy seems likely to increase, and he seems more attached to them than ever. He has quite gained the affection of all the Frys by his sweet and attentive behaviour to them, and I often wonder whether he will be a plain Friend or not: as far as we can foresee things there appears to be some probability of it. Joseph and Betsy have a great influence over him in that respect, and at present he seems to have little temptation or inclination to follow any other path. It is difficult, I think, to be here long without feeling the influence of Friends, and Betsy is so very nearly connected with us, that it is now and then painful not to be able to feel as she does. Chenda and I have now and then a few

friendly hints about it, especially from my Uncle Joseph and Cousin J. Bevan, who seem rather to watch over us, and always make very particular inquiries if we are absent from Meeting; but they are all truly kind to us.

"On Tuesday morning Chenda and I set off after breakfast in a glass coach by ourselves for the West End. We took a walk in St. James's Park, but when we wished to return to the coach, we found that we had entirely forgotten by what gate we had entered, and we wandered about for nearly two hours in a great fright, almost despairing of ever again reaching home; but at length recovered our carriage, and joyfully re-entered it.

"Chenda and I wear our dark gowns every day, and our aprons in the evening."

LOUISA to HANNAH GURNEY.

"*St. Mildred's Court*, 1804. — We have had a regular Mildred Court day, poor people coming one after another till twelve o'clock, and then no quiet; and each day I have been here we have had the Frys, or my uncle, or some one else at dinner. Dear Betsy gets through her bustles by letting them pass without teasing herself about them; she does feel them, but knows they must be borne.

"On my first evening I went with Gatty to Willis's Rooms, where we had a pleasant evening. The room, I think, is the most elegant I ever saw, and the company was no little amusement to us. The music was capital. Braham sang to perfection; but of all the singers I ever heard or people I ever saw, I never, I think, was so much struck by any one as by Grassini,



*Pocahontas Gurney of Ewerham.*

*from a sketch by Mr. P.*



the new actress. She is most fascinating, and as soon as you see her, you feel her effect; every movement and every look has something in it perfectly different from any I ever saw in any one before. She has a beautiful and fine figure and a handsome face, but it is more the finished grace of all she does that makes her so conspicuous. I do wish you could have heard her singing; I can only say how delighted I was with it. It is wholly different from the high clear notes of Mrs. Billington, but she has a depth of something like hoarseness of voice, with an expression that is most interesting."

LOUISA GURNEY to ELIZABETH FRY.

"*Earlham, Jan. 1, 1805.*—How difficult it is to me sometimes to keep my mind alive all Sunday; for the day's occupations are of such a nature that there is a great danger of its falling into a kind of inactivity, from not having the outward employment of the rest of the week. I have often thought of thee lately, and imagined thee in thy different offices; and amongst the many other pleasures of having been with thee is that of knowing exactly how thy time goes. I often seem to see thee in thy pink acorn gown attending to all thy flock in the dining-room, drawing-room, and—as I imagine—in the parlour, alternately running after thy servants, children, and poor. In short, I never felt before the kind of home interest in all of you in St. Mildred's Court which I feel now.

"I think the family here are going on remarkably comfortably, and all feeling the enjoyment of being again settled with my father and all the four boys.

John has taken his old place at home more than he has done for a long while. It requires, however, some time to find one's level after having been away for a long time from one's usual course of action; and, having been so long in a small party with those older than myself, I often feel the difficulty of acting as I wish under the numerous little rubs of clashing petty interests which there must always be in every family of equals. To learn humility seems one of the hardest of lessons, and I do believe you cannot teach it yourself, though I hope, when there is a desire to learn it, it will in time be taught."

CATHERINE to JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY.

"*Earlham, April 1805.*—Hannah is in excellent spirits, much happier than before Fowell's last visit; they correspond constantly, and he writes charming letters. How very pleasant it will be to have thee at home with us. Having one brother there, adds a cheerfulness and a sort of stimulus to a family. I often think how blessed we are in our external circumstances, so much leisure and liberty, and various other things that greatly contribute to the enjoyment of life. Almost the first blessing is the pleasure that we have in each other's society. Rachel and I find all the girls, according to their different characters, such delightful companions. Chenda soothing and engaging, and more pleasing than ever; Hannah full of life and spirit and acuteness; Louisa noble and strong, and brimming with generous sympathy; and Priscilla most amiable, with all that feminine sweetness which adorns a woman's character. Does not thee think this is very much what

they all are, only that in so small a compass one cannot half do them justice ? ”

RACHEL GURNEY to ELIZABETH FRY.

“ *Earlham, March 16, 1805.*—Had thee been with us, thee would have felt the same interest about Fowell and Hannah which has prevailed amongst us sisters. I had told Fowell how great a satisfaction openness would be to us all ; for considering the situation that both himself and Hannah had for some time been placed in, it had become a serious anxiety to us, especially to my father. So on Thursday, as soon as the family was dispersed, Kitty and I settled them together in the dressing-room. They both looked a little miserable on the occasion, but we stayed with them a minute or two, and laughed at the extreme difficulty they both seemed to feel in speaking, and then shut the door upon them.

“ Great was our anxiety, but we recovered our composure when we found an hour and a half had elapsed, and no effort made by either to disengage themselves, and we were almost surprised as well as comforted to see them walk off into the garden arm in arm, off into the park, and into the meadows beyond the pond, as if they wished to get out of everybody’s way. I should think they walked at least an hour. The weather was beautiful, calm and sunshiny, and truly symbolical of the happy events of the morning. They at length joined the others, and I heartily wish thee could have seen the sunshine that prevailed on every countenance when they came in. Fowell looked like a person who had been condemned to be hanged and

had gained a reprieve. Hannah quite easy and cheerful, as if her mind had cast off all its burdens. Anna<sup>1</sup> cried for joy. All the others looked almost as relieved as Hannah. Fowell and Anna went off together, and then we all sat with Hannah on the sofa in Chenda's room to hear her history.

"She said that after they were left alone, almost all the difficulty vanished, and they felt at once at ease with each other, and by degrees very much unfolded the state of each other's minds. Fowell fully expressed to her the strength of his attachment to her, which by his own account has long been the principal object of his heart. He also particularly told her what a preservation it had been to him against all the excesses common in a college life, and how afraid he had felt of being unable to gain her affection. She told him, in her turn, how much she had of late felt upon the subject, and those doubts that have arisen from his youth, but also told him what confidence and comfort his virtuous principles had afforded her. She says that when they had once broken down these barriers, they felt really happy together, and even enjoyed being alone, both when they spoke and when they were silent.

"On their return, we all assembled again in the music-room, and continued reading the Life of Hooker most peacefully and pleasantly. There did not seem to be one painful drawback in the mind of any individual, and yet there was nothing like enthusiastic pleasure or violent feeling on the part of any one concerned. They

<sup>1</sup> Fowell Buxton's eldest sister, who afterwards married William Forster of Bradpole.



had before fixed to dance in the evening, and as it happened, it turned out very pleasantly. Several gentlemen, Mr. Pitchford, Ives, a Mr. Turner, and Miss Day dined here. We had quite a quiet and pleasant company day, and in the evening a remarkably pleasant dance, in which, though I know it cannot quite excite thy sympathy, it will be a satisfaction to thee to know that neither Fowell, nor Hannah, nor the girls seemed to be the least thrown off their centre; while as a divert from the cares of the morning, it was of use to the whole party. We could not help looking with feelings of great pleasure on Fowell and Hannah, both appearing to no small advantage in our eyes, who could read the expression of their countenances. Hannah was by no means merry, but seemed to be softened in feeling by her circumstances being so particularly interesting.

“We have not yet unfolded the present state of things to my father, but Kitty and I are to tell him everything, that Fowell may afterwards speak with more ease. . . . They both seem to feel it essential to be a good deal alone, that they may more fully enter into the state of each other’s minds, and every interview of this kind has hitherto been attended by very satisfactory results. Instead of making Hannah uncomfortable, it more and more confirms her confidence in him. This morning she sat at work, and he by her side, and they looked as calm and comfortable as an old married pair: to me surprisingly so, for I had no idea that the course of Hannah’s mind on the subject could have been so remarkably smooth. Personally I am so free from any misgiving, that I have felt it to be

an essential blessing that the way is so far opened for a continuance of their attachment."

"*Sunday Morning*.—We have been very quietly and comfortably to Meeting this morning, and yesterday, after I wrote to you, spent a quiet day entirely alone, which was really delightful. We spoke to my father this morning, and he treats the affair with the greatest sympathy and indulgence. I am sure Joseph and Sam, as well as thyself, will sympathise with us."

RACHEL GURNEY to FOWELL BUXTON, at College.

"*May 14, 1805*.—I cannot easily tell you how heartily we all rejoice in your successes at college, and it is delightful to know how much value you set on our approbation. You have it, my dear brother, in full measure, and, with it, the heartfelt love of our family circle. You and Anna have so much increased the happiness of our family, and are become so like members of it, that I do not know how we should bear the loss of either of you. I love you partly for Hannah's sake, but I can truly say that I now love her also for yours, as well as so dearly for her own. I hope that, from your wish to marry, you may not do anything prematurely. I heartily wish you may stay at college till you are of age, and then, if there should be any opening in your circumstances, we should none of us be sorry to let you take Hannah away from us, though I can assure you we do not undervalue her at home.

"Joseph continues to be very industrious in his studies, but I fear my father will have him in business

this autumn, which I cannot but regret, though his living with us will be such an addition to our comfort."

CATHERINE GURNEY to ELIZABETH FRY.

"*Earlham, Monday, August 6, 1805.*—I wish I could write to thee more, for I should like thee to know my daily concerns more than I can make them known to thee. Yesterday I particularly wished both for thee and Joseph to join our happy party, we had such a remarkably quiet, happy, satisfactory day. We all went to Meeting in the morning, dined at four, and read together in the drawing-room before dinner, my father, John, and all of us, and we thought how pleased thee and Joseph would have been could you have seen us. However, do not suppose by this, we have profited more than we have by all your late conversations, as I think we are really much the same as we were, only that I hope we all desire more and more to seek for what is good, wherever it may be found. The rest of the day was spent sweetly and harmoniously, and we only wanted thee to complete our family circle. Fowell and Hannah go on delightfully; they are just what thee would wish to see, so much true intimacy and love, without the least flirting or vanity excited. How much thee would admire them together. In their usual manner, they are most like a very affectionate brother and sister, but she is getting so dependent upon him, that it would not at all do to have him here very long, and this they both think: so I suppose he will leave us in about a week. He is on the most happy terms with all the rest of the family, very attentive to my

father, and quite a brother to us. A real friend and valuable adviser I believe he will prove to Sam and Joseph. . . . I am sure Joseph (Fry) need not be the least anxious about Sam: Rachel has had conversation with him, and very satisfactory. To-day they are all playing cricket with a party of gentlemen. . . . Dan is going to take this to the Eton turnpike."

CATHERINE GURNEY to T. FOWELL BUXTON.

"*Earlham, Dec. 15, 1805.*—I must tell thee what perhaps will amuse thee,—that I have just left a pleasant party in the anteroom, consisting of Rachel, Chenda, Hannah, and Dan, employed in music and drawing, to come and sit in the dressing-room with Joseph, who is studying by the sofa while I am writing to thee.

"Now I daresay thee wishes me to tell thee about Hannah. She is, in the first place, quite well and in very good spirits. It seems to me that her attachment to thee is of the strongest, and consequently most durable nature. One of the strongest proofs of this is its effect on her character, which has, in my opinion, been highly beneficial; so that if thee has derived advantages from her influence, thee may also have the satisfaction of knowing that thy influence over her has had a similar tendency.

"Thee knows without my repeating it here the great satisfaction and pleasure thee has hitherto afforded us all, and how much thee art, dear Fowell, after our own heart, and exactly what pleases both our judgment and taste. I like and love everything thee says and does. However, I do not like to give

way to this kind of partiality ; for, after all, how imperfect the best of us are, and how frail are all our virtues, unless they are derived from the only source of true strength, a *principle of religion* in the conscience. I have no faith in any virtue which arises merely from natural impulse, because, though frequently amiable and excellent in appearance, we are sure to find that it partakes of the variability of our present weak and corrupt nature, and on this account can never stand the test of trials, as that virtue *will* which has its basis in Christian faith. Now I have sometimes thought, from thy natural impulses being remarkably good, there is some danger of thy depending too much on thyself, and not sufficiently seeking for assistance and direction in thy conduct from that Source of light and strength which alone can ensure thy continuance and progress in the best things. I know Hannah's happiness is completely dependent on thee. I know, too, how deeply and increasingly she feels the importance of *religious* principle ; therefore, for her sake as well as thy own, I am most anxious that thy mind should be equally impressed by the importance and the necessity of seeking to possess it, as the foundation of all your future comforts. I am quite sure that Hannah, with her feelings on the subject, never would be completely happy unless it were the constantly regulating principle of action in thy mind, in preference to any particular affection.

"Don't suppose, dear Fowell, I mean to *lecture* thee. I only mean to advise thee not to depend too much on the gifts of nature, but to look to the Power from whom these gifts are derived, and by so doing

learn the true means of turning both the one and the other to thy own and dear Hannah's ultimate advantage.

"Our dear friend and favourite, Mr. Wordsworth, has been paying us a visit of two days; we have enjoyed his company exceedingly. How beautifully the influence of religious principle, united with deep learning, appears in his character. Such examples ought to be encouraging, and stimulate us to act according to the talents bestowed on us.

"This morning we had some delightful hours, sitting with him all together in the dressing-room, talking on different subjects, and then he read to us in Taylor's 'Life of Christ.' What wilt thee say to this long letter? Thee must excuse it, and believe me, dearest Fowell, thy truly affectionate

"CATHERINE GURNEY."

SAMUEL to HANNAH GURNEY.

"*Mildred's Court, March 21, 1806.*—The great change to Mildred's Court after our large and cheerful party during my pleasant week at Earlham, made it appear at first thoroughly dull. But by entering with spirit into business, and a determination to conquer the unpleasant sensations which leaving all of you brought, I have become tolerably comfortable. I have had a good deal of a certain gigantic young man's company, which I have enjoyed very much indeed; the more I am with him, the more I like him."

Meantime Joseph John Gurney, though not allowed, as a Quaker, to become a member of



*Samuel Gurney*





the University, was spending two years at Oxford, working very vigorously under the tutorship of Mr. John Rogers, a most eccentric man, but described as "a pleasant and learned gentleman" by the young student, who did not at all mind reading with him for fourteen hours a day, and being made in a single day to translate the whole of Longinus.

JOSEPH JOHN to RACHEL GURNEY.

"*Oxford, Feb. 23, 1805.*—I have read this week almost half through one of Æschylus' plays, a great deal of Thucydides and Josephus, two or three acts of Plautus, a great part of Caligula's reign in Suetonius, four cantos of Dante, and a proportionate quantity of Davila; a tolerable number of verses in the Hebrew Bible, some Euclid, and a great deal of algebra; a crowd of German grammarians, with portions of Locke, Gregory, and Ferguson. Besides these things, I have been employed by exercises of all kinds, Latin verses, chemical lectures, and, to conclude the whole, the composition of a long dissertation in Greek:—rather a good week's work."

In his holidays Joseph John learnt Italian with his sister Priscilla, and worked at Greek and Hebrew by himself. He studied everything to its very bones. In July 1805 we find him writing to his brother Daniel:—

"Unless you know the grammar perfectly, you will always find Greek difficult. Never let a word pass without knowing every circumstance belonging to it. You will find this method tedious at first, but it will soon smooth down your difficulties."

Like his sisters, the young student had the closest habits of self-examination. In his journal we find the list of questions which he seems to have put to himself every evening:—

"Have I to-day been guarded in conversation, saying nothing inconsistent with truth, purity, or charity ?

"Have I felt love towards my neighbour ?

"Have I done my part towards my own family ?

"Have I been temperate, free from unlawful desires, habits, and anxieties ?

"Have I been diligent in business ?

"Have I given full time to effectual study ?

"Have I admitted any other fear than that of God ?

"Have I passed the day in deep humility, depending constantly upon, and earnestly aspiring after, divine assistance ?

"Have I in everything acted to the best of my knowledge according to the will of God ?

"Have I worshipped Him morning and evening ?"

In proportion as Joseph John Gurney fixed his mental gaze upon the great example set before us in the Gospels, his judgment on his own thoughts, words, and actions became in-

creasingly severe. He became more anxious to show unshrinkingly under what banner he had enlisted. "I must bear steady testimony to the truth in this world," he wrote in his private diary. "I must bow with resignation to the will of my God in all temporal and spiritual trials. In short, I must draw near unto Christ, and, if need be, take up my cross to follow Him.

'Bid me beneath Thy parent wing,  
Lord, in such peace remain,  
That every charm the world can bring  
May tempt my soul in vain.

So shall that soul to heaven above,  
To Thee in heaven aspire,  
And Thy celestial light and love  
Be all that soul's desire.'"

(*August 19, 1808.*)

The Rev. Edward Edwards, Rector of Lynn, who began to have a great part in the religious life of several of the home party at Earham, writes (1808) of Joseph John, then aged twenty:—

"He was an extraordinary young man, about twenty, actively employed in the bank at Norwich, yet in the habit of devoting so much time to study early in the morning, as to have read nearly the whole of the Old Testament in the original Hebrew.

"He was enabled to get through so much by the

exemplification of his favourite maxim—'Be a whole man to one thing at a time.'"

Of the "Meetings of Friends" Joseph John had, unlike most of his sisters, already the strongest appreciation. In his twentieth year we find him writing:—

"Their quietness, the seriousness of those Friends who are in the regular habit of attending them, the sweet feeling of unity in our worship, and the liveliness of the ministry on these occasions, are all hallowed in my mind and feelings; and were I asked what has been the happiest portion of my life, I believe I should not be far wrong in replying, the hours abstracted from the common business of the world for the purpose of public worship."

After John Gurney—the eldest brother of the family—had left his tutor, Mr. Rogers, he was for some time in the Gurney Bank at Norwich, until an opening occurred in the branch bank at Lynn, which he was considered the right person to fill. He had watched with some sorrow, whilst living at home, the growth of extreme sectarian views in his family, which narrowed, as he believed, their powers of usefulness, and seemed clouding the innocent pleasure of several young lives. It was impossible also that he could be otherwise

than amused at their constantly *deploring* his extreme good looks and engaging manners as likely to lead him into temptation—*i.e.*, in other than Quaker language, to make him a favourite with the society from which they were daily more and more withdrawing themselves. Many were the convocations in which his seven sisters discussed the best means of secluding their handsome brother from outside influences; many the conferences in Mr. Gurney's study in which the watchful Catherine urged her easy-going father to put as strong a restraint upon him as possible. Samuel at St. Mildred's Court, under the ever-close guardianship of Betsy, was not considered to be in any danger; but the snares of the world, the flesh, and the devil were too surely waiting at Lynn to devour John if he should go there alone. When eventually he took his place in the bank there, it was decided that one of his sisters—but oftenest the gentle Rachel, as likely to influence him most—should live with him and watch over him in turn.

Already, however, have Louisa's journal and her devoted friendship made us acquainted with her pretty attractive cousin Elizabeth Gurney of Keswick, so much and devotedly liked by all the family at Earlham. We have also a

description of her charms in Mr. Pitchford's diaries :—

“*August 6, 1798.*—Elizabeth of Keswick is a most sweet girl. Her manners are uncommonly elegant : her beautiful hair between flaxen and auburn ; her lovely blue eyes beaming with intelligence and full of inexpressible sweetness ; her complexion exquisitely fair, and her whole countenance full of the glow of youth.”<sup>1</sup>

In the summer of 1806, when a family tour to Scotland on a large scale was projected, Fowell Buxton, Sam Hoare, and John Gurney being of the party, Elizabeth Gurney of Keswick was invited to join them.

HANNAH GURNEY to ELIZABETH FRY.

“*Cambridge, July 16, 1806.*—Surrounded by almost our whole party, I sit down to write to thee. We have had a most comfortable and pleasant day's journey, and we have all much enjoyed ourselves, none more, I think, than my father, who was quite delighted with the remarkably sweet party which I must say we are. We set off in three chariots, with Sam and Louisa in a whisky behind us ; and most completely equipped for travelling we looked in every respect. Elizabeth Gurney enjoys our cheerful party. We arrived here to dinner about six, where we met

<sup>1</sup> Daniel Gurney's *Reminiscences* say—“She was striking and very handsome—a profusion of rich auburn hair, a regular and intelligent countenance, and beautiful and simple manners.”

John, who appears determined to be as agreeable an addition to our party as he can. We are sorry to part from Sam to-night, and wish he was to be our companion all the way; his visit has been most satisfactory and highly interesting; to have him and Fowell with us together has been more so to me than I can well say. . . . Fowell and I had a most comfortable ride in our chariot the first stage, and I have much enjoyed the quietness of travelling with him to-day. We are all very well and comfortable, and if our good minds do but last, we shall have a very uncommon journey; but in travelling with so numerous a party, there is much to try the patience, and great forbearance is necessary. To-morrow we see Burleigh House and sleep at Grantham."

The family spent some time at Ambleside, where Samuel Gurney and Fowell Buxton, under the supervision of Mr. Crome, occupied a separate lodging to the rest of the family. This enabled the future Lombard Street banker and the embryo statesman and philanthropist to dress up as widows and come to beg the assistance of the Miss Gurneys for themselves and their numerous children.

During their travels, John Gurney, who was at that time smarting under a refusal by another young Norfolk lady, Miss Susan Hamond of Westacre, by whose family his fortune was not considered sufficient, poured forth his sorrows

to his sympathetic cousin Elizabeth. The vicissitudes of the tour threw them constantly together, and before their return they were engaged—an engagement of first cousins, much deplored by John Gurney of Earlham, and vehemently opposed, at first absolutely prohibited, by Richard Gurney of Keswick. His feeling was stronger because marriages between first cousins are also strictly forbidden by the rules of the “Society of Friends,” who disown from their Society all those who contract them.

LOUISA GURNEY to FOWELL BUXTON.

“*Little Parlour, Oct. 1806.*—I have been wavering for some time between spending the evening with Hudson and the family in the Great Parlour, or retiring here to enjoy your company. . . . I cannot make out why I do not find it easier than I do to converse with you in a letter, when it would be so great a pleasure to be placed by your side over some snug fire, with time to talk over all that has happened since you left us. I believe, however, the cause is that I feel as if Hannah told you everything, so that I am only treading in a dull beaten track, but this is better than having no communication with you. I imagine you now poring over your books in your comfortable room. I long to take a peep at you. As the examinations approach, our interest will be doubly excited in all the accounts we have of your proceedings. I do not at all like to be so much separated from you as I have been for the



last month, as naughty Hannah has only favoured us poor sisters with two sentences out of the last, I think, of these letters, and been very silent as to their contents, except in expressing her own enjoyment of them. I think her journeys to Dublin are more frequent than ever, and often, when we are both gravely seated at our History, with every appearance of the profoundest attention, I am obliged to rouse her, at certain intervals, by asking who she is thinking of, and where she has wandered to.

“ But you must hear of the family, and not of Hannah now, so I will tell you something of the transactions of last week—a very gay one for the sober six, and, for a gay one, unusually pleasant. On Monday we had a stupidish dinner at the Fellowes’. On Tuesday, Rachel and we four went to a great concert at the Glovers’, which very much pleased us, and rather put us in mind, from the number of Norwich faces, of our evening at the Hortrays’, which our going to in a body made so pleasant. I wish you could always join us in those expeditions, for they borrow pleasure from the party who unite in them, and no people make our gaiety so agreeable as you and Anna. The following day the Hoares arrived, and became our chief object for the rest of the week, and a very pleasant one too, as we never enjoyed their company, I think, as much. How foolish and wrong it is to discolour absent people in your own mind! I think we are all apt to do this, and, when we meet people, as apt to repent of it and be pleased with them. This has often been our case with regard to the Hoares, but they have much heart, and are so very agreeable as companions, that they excite

very sincere regard as well as liking, and their visit has quite inclined us to give them their full due. On Thursday they dined out, but Friday was such a rout from morning to night, that even Weymouth could not exceed it; except that all was done orderly and pleasantly. We had a large party at breakfast, a larger at dinner, and largest in the evening, so that at supper the table extended from the top of the bow to the side-board in the Great Parlour. Such a flow of company was partly from design and partly from chance. We had music, and Miss Gordon's delightful singing for about the first hour in the evening. Dancing succeeded till nearly twelve, when we supped: after which, for a wonder, the whole party migrated to the anteroom, and the farewell *boulangier* was not over, I suppose, till past one. I did not individually enjoy the party so much as more intimate parties; but everything passed off remarkably well, and all the company seemed thoroughly to enjoy themselves.

"The Hoares were all struck with Hannah's improvement—the agreeable confidence she has acquired, and which they had the strange idea of attributing to you. I did not, however, much differ from them. I liked them the better for being so warm about you, and so pleased with the connection.

"Chenda is just come in, saying that she is charmed with herself, and has done to her gown what Mrs. Freeman, with all her abilities, could never do. I wish I had a little of her delightful view of things, and that I was as much charmed with my letter as she is with her work. . . . I often wonder, or rather think others must wonder, to see how busy I am, and yet how little

I do ; but striving to do much always with me defeats its own end. The little Bells have been one of our objects, as we wish to send them away loaded with all the family accomplishments : do you not pity them with their six mistresses ? Joseph goes on as well as we could wish, and is a great addition to our party. John is with us, but we are, as usual, too much separated. The clock has struck nine, and the tray has just rattled through the hall, so I think it is time to put an end to this letter, which has brought me very pleasantly near to you, dear Fowell."

RACHEL GURNEY to FOWELL BUXTON (at College,  
after the return of the family from Scotland).

"*Earlham, Dec. 9, 1806.*—We have had a very pleasant little dance, contrived chiefly for the purpose of bringing Mr. Pitchford here. Dr. Southey came with him, quite a new personage on our stage, full of life and spirits, and remarkably handsome. Pris, our little rosy Pris, has quite enjoyed a little flirtation with this fascinating youth. Happily he leaves Norwich in a few weeks, or I fear Cupid would again be making inroads amongst us. George Kett was in a very agreeable mind, flirted—who do you think with?—thy Hannah ! They were quite merry together. I do love to see her with other young men in your absence ; she has all the ease that arises from having the heart wholly secured. How I longed for you, and how you would have added to the enjoyment of the evening ! I hope it is not wrong to be a little proud of you. Mr. Pitchford was most agreeable, so truly kind and sympathising about Louisa, and so

affectionate to us, yet so inflexibly steady in the forbearance and self-denial that he has prescribed to himself.<sup>1</sup> I earnestly hope he may find his reward in that which can never fail, and I hope that we all (I include my brothers) shall be real friends to him through everything. . . . I doubt not Hannah has told you how valuable our mornings have been lately to us. We have spent the greater part of them together (we six girls) in the dressing-room, and have enjoyed each other's company. It is wonderful to think how nearly the separation approaches. We greatly rejoice in having spent so many quiet and happy years together as have fallen to our lot since Betsy's marriage. It has so cemented that union which exists amongst us, and has given so much time for our minds and sentiments to grow together, which could not have been the case had we sooner dispersed. If I had married when I wished to do so, I should hardly have known the girls in their present state. Thus there is generally a mixture of good and evil in all things. Louisa's heart is very full, and she is at times oppressed by the near approach of so great a change, and she has often lately been drowned in tears.

"To-morrow Hannah and I go to Northrepps for a few days, to see our new sister-elect. John's last visit to her seems to have been a very happy one, and our uncle a little more favourable to him towards the close of it. Elizabeth writes as if she became more and more dependent on him."

Readers will gather from the last letter that

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, towards the writer, Rachel Gurney, herself.

Louisa Gurney now had her own especial interests and anxieties. Sam Hoare, a second cousin of the Gurneys, and a banker of good fortune, had become a constant visitor at Earlham and a great favourite with old and young. He had also accompanied the family on their Scotch tour. From Louisa, who had charmed him in childhood, his preference had never wavered, and his attentions were warmly welcomed by Mr. Gurney, who had been an attached and intimate friend of his father. Samuel Hoare and Louisa Gurney were married in December 1806, at the Friends' Meeting at Tasborough, not far from Norwich.

RACHEL GURNEY to FOWELL BUXTON.

"*Earlham, Dec. 31, 1806.*—Louisa and Sam returned yesterday from Cromer, where they have been spending nearly a week in retirement, so that they have now the effect of married people who have begun their career together. Louisa looks sweetly and Sam truly happy. I never saw a greater mixture of dignity and sweetness than in our bride. How we did long for thee, dear Fowell, to be with us. The love that prevailed amongst all deeply concerned was delightful, and the uncommon solemnity and yet sweetness of the Meeting seemed to sanctify their union in a manner never to be forgotten. It was a most pleasant sight to have so long a train of brothers and sisters in wedding garments. The whole day was without a cloud—so

seriously and quietly conducted, and yet so truly cheerful. The troops of young people were very enlivening, and the old most kind and sympathising. Our greatest regret was not having our dearest Fowell with us."

RACHEL GURNEY to FOWELL BUXTON (at College).

"*St. Mildred's Court, Jan. 14, 1807.*—Hannah will have told thee all about Louisa's visit to Earlham after her return from Cromer, and of her finally leaving home, and how much she felt it, which is not to be wondered at, considering what a happy home she leaves, though her prospects are bright. She has in Sam almost all that she can wish, yet the pain of entering a new circle and leaving all those she is so very closely united to, must be expected to take at least from her present enjoyment. I have no doubt she will become happier and happier in proportion as she is familiarised to the change. Thee must be prepared for a few tears when thee runs off with Hannah, though I do not think that she or any of us will feel it so much as Louisa's marriage. Thee has been too completely one of the family, and for my part, I look forward to thy wedding with pleasure, as uniting us to thee more nearly."

LOUISA HOARE to HANNAH GURNEY.

"*Jan. 25, 1807.*—I have a great deal to say, but do not know whether to begin with myself or thee. . . . I am at last beginning to feel the pleasure of our quiet establishment and the happiness of a union with my

dearest Sam. In that and in all other things there are feelings of flatness which you will not misunderstand, for you know how happy I feel in him, and how affectionately and dearly I love him. Housekeeping and servants are still a weight, but I have advanced gradually, and am much encouraged by what I now imagine my own cleverness. With experience, however, I may prove the fallacy of this imagination. I have much wished, dearest Hannah, that thee would have persevered in thy housekeeping and cutting-out plans in spite of all discouragement, for I should have been far more *painfully* at a loss had I not attended the little I did, and it is no small relief to be pretty free from these cares just after marrying, when the mind is ever occupied; indeed, I strongly feel what an inestimable advantage it is for every one to be well prepared in things both great and small before marrying. Seeing how much the little I have is now called into use, and how much what *I want* is seen and missed, makes me feel the importance of perseverance and vigilance, even when I do not perceive the immediate good effects from them. It also makes me more earnestly wish that thee may not give way to *discouragement* in anything till thee marries; but pursue with spirit all thy good and useful plans, even if thee seems to thyself going on but poorly in them. I have at times felt more, I think, than any one of us imagined I should, entering a new family, and having to act as Sam's wife before them all. How I wish I may endeavour to obtain a right independence of them, together with a sincere wish to consult their real happiness and wishes, as far as I reasonably can.

"We dined at the Heath<sup>1</sup> on Wednesday, and though I was much depressed in the morning after a fatiguing expedition to London, the day was the *easiest* I have yet spent, and I felt cheerful and comfortable amongst them all. Engaged as we now are, few days indeed fall to our share to be spent quite alone, but I hope this now will subside. At times, however, I am a little discouraged by the multiplicity of the *new* calls upon us, as if we should have so very little time quite to ourselves; and I do not think this reasonable. Yesterday was my first full company-day at home, and it was highly interesting to me, and many parts truly pleasant; but being so unused to it, I was a little confused by the number of interesting persons and having to entertain them all. It was Sam's day out, so I determined to enjoy dear Betsy and all her darling and noisy flock. They arrived in a hack about one, with dear Chenda, and before dinner we four rode up to see our house, which I liked better than before, and with which they were all much pleased. Fowell walked in with Dan at his side a little before three, and soon after that we dined, the children in the drawing-room and we in the dining-room; I quite 'mistress,' anxious about my dinner and the nice entertainment of all my dear guests. It was so very strange to me to find myself in this capacity with all of them. We chatted pleasantly in the afternoon, and, after an early tea, Betsy, Catherine, and brats left us three to a truly snug and happy evening. But I must first tell you how very sweet the darling children were, and what a treat it was to me to have

<sup>1</sup> With her husband's parents, who were also her father's cousins,



them routing about the house. They all seemed thoroughly to enjoy the novelty, and were quite happy with their exalted ideas of 'Aunt Hoare' and her house, which little Rachel said was almost as fine as the King's house. But now for our evening. Imagine dear Fowell stretched on the sofa, which was wheeled close to a cheerful bright fire, and Chenda and me sitting by him. After a little very pleasant and interesting conversation, I read thy letter to Betsy to him,<sup>1</sup> and determined to talk as well as I could on the subject, feeling so earnestly desirous that it may not be put off, but effectually thought of and acted upon. He seems, certainly, very desirous of being a member of the Society from approving their doctrine in great measure, but still more, I think, from admiring and valuing the effects of it upon their conduct. His sentiments on some of the chief points seemed, however, unfixed. We advised him not to perplex himself so much to settle them, but seriously to weigh what he thought best, considering the present state of his mind; to exert himself about it, and to remember the most important consequences of his being in the Society, and how far he would like to submit to them, even if there were temptations to the contrary—as to oaths, arms, &c.

"About eight dear Sam came in, looking most sweet and cheerful, rejoicing to be at home and delighted to see Fowell. I think I never saw them on more happy or brotherly terms. We all sat round the fire, talking, laughing, and easy and happy, Fowell looking truly

<sup>1</sup> As to Fowell Buxton's formally becoming a member of the Society of Friends.

one of us again. I told him a good deal about our wedding, and pictured him through the different scenes of the same transaction. We longed for thee, dearest Hannah, to share the pleasure, and felt it was almost unfair that we should have it first. After a snug supper, and a little more comfortable sitting over the fire, we went to bed. This morning we met again at breakfast, and then Chenda and I walked with Fowell and Sam part of the way towards London.

“We rather hope we may see Fowell on Monday to breakfast, but this is uncertain. I think I never saw him look more sweet and innocent in manners than he does now; indeed, I do think thee has got a delightful husband. I did think what two prizes they were when I saw him and Sam walk off arm in arm this morning, both looking so very agreeable, handsome, and delightful.

“One more hint about marrying. I trust thee will not have thy wedding clothes begun without telling me, as, from experience, I think I could give thee some useful hints. I rather long for the complete regulation of thy mind, which I could now do to a nicety! . . . I walk out constantly, sometimes round and round the gardens, sometimes part of the way to London with Sam. I enjoy Chenda’s company, and Catherine’s company too is increasingly valuable to me. I am fully convinced that her coming was the wisest plan: it is so great a help to me. When we are quite undisturbed, we generally get up about seven, and read very comfortably till breakfast, after which Sam goes off to London. Then I go into the kitchen, order dinner, and devote myself for a time to

thinking of household concerns; an hour or two of quiet reading and thinking follows this, after which I walk, and often read a little later—for the good of my mind—till dressing-time. I am almost always ready to receive my dearest Sam on his return, and to attend on him while he is in his little dressing-room. Catherine—except at dinner and tea—often leaves us most of the afternoon and evening, which are more than filled up in talking, enjoying the rest of being together, and reading lighter books, such as ‘Walton’s Lives.’

“I do hope you are careful about mad dogs (for the number of people bitten is shocking), and that you will make Joseph go out in boots, for they generally bite men’s legs.”

On January 6, 1807, the marriage of John and Elizabeth Gurney had taken place, though, as the parents of Quaker first cousins are strictly forbidden to approve their marriage, Richard Gurney was compelled to show himself, ostentatiously walking in an opposite direction with his son-in-law Samson Hanbury, so as to avoid all chance of his being said to witness, or even to countenance it.

Then, on the 7th of May 1807, Fowell Buxton’s marriage with Hannah Gurney, so long deferred, was solemnised at the Quakers’ Meeting-house at Tasborough. Rachel’s journal tells us about it:—

"*Earlham, May 7, 1807.*—We all rose in good time, the weather mild and summerlike; our bride composed and cheerful. Many collected to read as usual before breakfast, and after it we dispersed till it was time to equip ourselves in bridal array. The house was overrun with bridesmaids in muslin cloaks and chip hats. We led our sweet bride to the stairs, where our men joined us, and we had all a pleasant drive to Tasborough. To me the Meeting was solemn in its beginning, and striking from such a circle of brothers and sisters so united in affection; it might well recall a verse in the Psalms, 'Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.' Our dear couple spoke with much feeling, and Fowell with his usual dignity. Preparing for dinner took up the rest of the morning, and nothing could be prettier than the train of bridesmaids dressed alike in white, with small nosegays, except the bride, who looked lovely, who was still more white, and was distinguished by one beautiful rose. At dinner were my father's fifteen children and four grandchildren. Afterwards the whole party dispersed in different parts of the house. Hannah sat with Elizabeth in her room. At tea all reassembled. Our dearest Fowell was most affectionate and sweet to us all; I think there was scarcely ever such a brother admitted to a family."

From a worldly point of view, Hannah Gurney's marriage had seemed to be far from a brilliant one. When he was first intimate with the Gurneys, Fowell Buxton had expectations of succeeding to a large property in Ireland, but



*Hannah Gurney*  
*of Earlham*



these had been disappointed, and he had been glad to accept a situation as clerk in the large brewery of Truman & Hanbury, with a prospect of partnership after three years' probation. The life was by no means what he would have chosen, but he took into his work the *wholeness* of mind, the fixity of purpose, which always characterised him. Whatever his hand found to do, he did it with his might, and this was the secret of the success which always attended him. Of himself he said, "I could brew one hour, do mathematics the next, and shoot the next, and each with my whole soul."

A fortnight after the marriage Rachel Gurney writes :—

"*May 19, 1807.*—I accompanied my father to Northrepps to visit our three dear pairs. The sight of them all so happily married—John and Elizabeth, Sam and Louisa, Fowell and Hannah—was delightful, particularly to see the sweet and happy looks of my dearest Fowell and Hannah."

## V

### BROTHERS AND SISTERS

“Good, the more  
Communicated, more abundant grows ;  
The author not impair’d, but honour’d more.”

—MILTON.

“A renewed nature is the very image of God, it is a beam from the face of God.”—BAXTER.

A FEW days after their marriage, Rachel Gurney wrote to the Buxtons :—

“*Earlham, May 22, 1807.*—I daresay, dearest Fowell and Hannah, you do not wonder that, in certain moods, the past should rise up mournfully before me. The sight of you all happily married brings some sad regrets, but happily their acuteness is very much gone, and in the awful and blessed moments when I am enabled to wait at the footstool of my Great Lord and Master, my murmurings are hushed, and the storm becomes a calm, and I can kiss the hand that chastens me. . . . How beautiful and affecting was the reproof of our Saviour to Martha—‘Thou art cumbered about many things, but one thing *only* is needful!’ I am persuaded that it is only by waiting upon Him for the deep and



inward communion of His Spirit that a great and glorious work can be effected in us. . . . I would, then, have you every morning, after reading a small portion of the Scriptures, make a solemn pause for a few minutes, and, either in kneeling or sitting, together unite in the sincere endeavour to come into His presence who mercifully accepts the least offering of the heart, and will bless you with the hundred-fold in this present life. I have often thought that the benefits of true silence are far too little sought after, even by those religiously disposed; and this I do not say as a Quaker, but as one who has some little experience of the necessity of having the human nature brought into subjection before God, in order to render Him acceptable worship. It is 'in the stillness of all flesh' that we must approach the Father of spirits. 'God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.' And wherever you may be in future, or however circumstanced, you will feel the comfort of sometimes uniting in this solemn silence, if it were only for a very short time. Knowing my great love for you both, you will not wonder that I have longing feelings to unite with you a little in these things at the beginning of your career. I wish to love thee, to cherish the tenderest sympathy for thee, my dear Hannah, my closely beloved sister, under whatever circumstances may await thee, and to feel the full value and delight of having such a brother, one to whom I can intimately confide my thoughts and feelings, and whose love is a real support and encouragement to me."

Hannah had been perhaps, of all the sisters, the one who loved Earlham most. To break her parting from home, the bridal pair had stayed there a few days after their marriage. The day after they left, Catherine Gurney had written to T. Fowell Buxton :—

“1807.—Your going has been deeply felt, dearest Fowell, and nothing can make up fully for the loss of our dearest Hannah but believing that she is happier with thee than she could have been with all of us. We therefore *depend* upon thee for making her so, and knowing thy love for her and for us, as well as thy principle, we have the firmest reliance upon thee. This is by far the greatest *earthly* consolation in the pain of separation, and I have every hope that your mutual happiness will more and more reconcile us to it. Yet I wish you to know, my dearest brother, how *much* we feel we give up for thy sake. Do feel for dear Hannah in the sacrifice she makes of such a happy home as hers has been, and the trial of entering amongst new scenes and people; all these things affect a woman's feelings more than men are always aware of; so do be *very* watchful over her, and never let her be long without thy company and soothing, supporting influence, for who can do her half as much good as thee can? Not one of us can have the same power to cheer and comfort her. I hope thee will not dislike my writing a little to thee now and then in my letters to her; I feel you both so *very* near my heart.”

And again a little later to Hannah Buxton :—

"*Earlham*, 1807.—I have just seated myself in my own room immediately after breakfast, whilst the others are taking their turn round the garden this beautiful morning. Nothing can look more bright and cheerful than the place, and everybody seems in a happy mind. . . . I am far from thinking that the pleasure of being together again will be in any degree lessened by our separation. It seems to me as if nothing *could* lessen it, but, on the contrary, as if the variety of circumstances in which we shall each have been placed would make it more delightful. I am almost surprised at myself for being now *satisfied* in leaving thee at Weymouth, and so little impatient to have thee within reach. Thy being treated with so much respect and kindness in thy husband's family is a blessed proof of thy own prudence and principle, and in this light particularly valuable to me. Thy being enabled also to be so contented and usefully employed in thy solitary house is another source of real satisfaction to me, and the *capability* of happiness between you and dear Fowell when you are undisturbed is more than either of these perhaps. . . . My father always enjoys hearing parts of thy letters which we read to him, and I like that his interest about thee should be kept alive constantly. If it is only on this account, I hope that thee will always write and inform him of thy plans."

In June the Buxtons paid Earlham a long visit. After they left Rachel Gurney wrote:—

"*Earlham*, July 8, 1807.—I must give you the history of those you left behind you, as it concerns you

to know how much tenderness and affection has been excited on your behalf. After you drove off on Tuesday evening my father and Joseph and I walked through the garden and along the path towards the violet-grove, all deeply impressed by parting with you. At last my father burst into tears, which, you may be sure, affected us not a little. Upon recovering himself, he opened his heart to us in the sweetest manner about you. He expressed how deeply he felt giving Hannah up, and her quitting this *sheltered* home in order to occupy a new post of greater importance and perhaps of greater difficulty. He felt that she might be exposed to some trials and some anxieties, but he said that he felt a secure ground of hope from his confidence in Fowell's principles and attachment to Hannah; while the thought of Hannah's amiable and virtuous disposition made him believe in her having every blessing requisite for her peace. Indeed, though the way in which he spoke of all his children drew tears from me, it has left a peaceful impression on my mind. After this intimate disburdening of our feelings, we became more comfortable, and on our arrival by the river-side, found some boys fishing, whom we brought in for a feast of strawberries; and in the evening we endeavoured to amuse ourselves with the little Scarnells.

"The nearness of harmony we have felt has made up for the melancholy which an empty house inclines us to. The next morning we read, and after breakfast went to Meeting. I felt the comfort, as I do continually, of dear Joseph's uniting with us in everything. We three were the only Gurneys at Meeting. Afterwards Richard drove me over to Keswick, and the

rest of the day was devoted to my Aunt and Anna, who stood in need of it. The servants have been much affected by your going. Thee hath the satisfaction, dear Hannah, of knowing that the love of the whole household attends thee. Judd was quite enthusiastic in her lamentations, saying 'thee wert a lady she could live and die with.'"

Owing to Mrs. Buxton's youth, and her extreme feeling of desolation in being separated from all her own family while her husband was so often absent all day on business, her sister Priscilla remained with her till September, when she went to Mrs. Fry.

PRISCILLA GURNEY to HANNAH, MRS. BUXTON.

"*St. Mildred's Court, Sept. 1807.*—Thee knows how dull Mildred Court can be, so I need not describe it to thee. The children have been my only comfort. Little Rachel, Johnny, and I have been drinking tea together, and they have made me quite cheerful and happy. Now Johnny is playing by my side: he is most sweet. I wish he could spend an hour or two with thee, thee would so much enjoy it."

*To the Same.*

"*Sept. 29, 1807.*—I think of thee constantly. . . . I have had a pleasant visit to dear Sam and Elizabeth at Upton, and truly was I pleased with them as a pair, so sweet and unaffected are her manners to him, and he is as much in love with her as any

person can be. When I returned to Mildred's Court, I caught a little of dear Betsy's company at intervals. She was so interested about you, but she is never as warm about people as we are, which arises from her very superior principle, and yet is perhaps a little damping where your feelings are highly interested. She is, to be sure, a most uncommon person, and one is almost surprised to find any one so exemplary in conduct, so entirely under the right *subjection* as she is. . . . I can hardly say, too, how sweet I think her conduct is to all of us. I went on Sunday to both the Gracechurch Street Meetings, which were unusually impressive to me. I have a good deal felt being with Friends again, which is perhaps owing to having been so long away from their influence, but on the whole it was more encouraging to me than uncomfortable. . . . The way for dear home now seems completely to be opened, and not a little do I long to be there in the rest and tranquillity which home alone affords."

CATHERINE GURNEY to HANNAH, MRS. BUXTON.

"*Oxford, Sept. 1807.*—I have felt Priscilla leaving thee not a little, but believe it may be best, for I think thee and dear Fowell may, in some respects, be more happy and completely united by being left to yourselves, and I trust to thy wisdom to be as cheerful *as thee can* during thy entire separation from us, though I depend on thee telling me *exactly* how thee goes on. . . . I often feel comfort about thee, though separation is painful to me, and my principal comfort is that I do believe both dear Fowell and thee have it at heart to make

what is good your first object, and this will in time lead to true prosperity.

"I cannot tell thee, love, how much I sympathise with thee in giving up Priscilla, but I hope and trust thee will endeavour to be as cheerful under it as thee can, and thee must remember how often some in the family have had to be a good while without a sister."

"Oct. 3, 1807.—I am feeling much more resigned to thy absence, which I found very difficult to bear on first coming home. I can feel now as well as think that thee art in thy right place, as well as those that are at home, and this makes me easy as well as cheerful about thee. I have such comfort, too, in believing that our union can only be *confirmed* by these changes and circumstances. I believe they are calculated to exercise and draw forth our principles in the highest sense, and our affection for each other, and that in the end we shall be all the happier for them. This is the time for the pains which must naturally arise from the family dispersion, though we may trust it will produce *good* fruits, and that by-and-by we shall have to rejoice in it. I have all along endeavoured to believe all this, but I think I have not at all felt it so encouragingly as I did yesterday, when, though I fancied thee alone most of the day, I had very little pain in the idea of it, and scarcely wished thee to be with us, from the strong sense in my mind that all will be well with us if we do but endeavour to do our parts in our different situations. Thus my clouds have been dispersed, and when once we begin to have our minds set in order by the influence

of religion, we are able to see *secondary* motives of consolation, as well as those of the deepest nature. I have been thinking that we ought to be very thankful that thee and dear Fowell have not been disappointed in your affections, for what sad work it frequently is when this happens! Though thee has had much suffering from the change, how much more *desolate* a disappointment to all thy prospects would have made thee, and how far less, I think, would a single life have suited thee than the duties and employments of a wife and mother. This applies to thee more than to most in the family, for we all agree that thee art quite formed by nature for the married woman. Supposing thee had always remained at home, thee would be sure to have been spared some suffering and many cares thee hast now had, but how much more *stagnant* thy mind would have been, and how far less thy character and virtues would most likely have been called forth. Taking in the long-run of life, how much more desirable does it appear for thee to have so important a sphere of action as thine now is, and will be more and more in all probability. My great wish for thee now is that thy heart may be devoted as it ought to the high duties thee hast to perform, and that thee may more and more be enabled to transfer *dependence*, as far as human dependence goes, from us to Fowell. This, as I have said before, can never in the least degree lessen our union or intimacy, but, on the contrary, must increase it by the exercise of principle it will be to thy mind. I am convinced that in proportion as religious principle is exercised, real union is confirmed. How much this has been the case with both Betsy and Louisa,



how *far* more united we have been with Betsy since she married, and I think I never felt such harmony opened with Louisa as now. I have no doubt, dear Hannah, that this will be the case with thee too, if thee makes thy present important duties thy first object. I was quite delighted with what thee said in thy letter to Priscilla on this subject, expressing thy desire to correct thy own quickness and irritability towards dear Fowell. This is certainly most desirable, for it is a very serious thing to *begin* anything approaching to a bickering habit. What a prodigious disadvantage that has been in some instances we know, even where people are reckoned to be on good terms, and have perhaps a fundamental regard for each other; it seems entirely to spoil the happiness of married life, to make people at last quite dislike each other's company: my Uncle and Aunt Gurney are such an instance. What seems a nothing in the beginning becomes at last mutual unhappiness. What an example of the contrary my father and mother were. I remember it was quite a shock to my feelings, when I was a child, if they differed at all in opinion, it was what I was so unaccustomed to. What a high standard we have before us in this, as well as in other things, in our mother's character, and how good it is for us often to recur to it. Thee hast very much the same sort of mind she had, and I believe, by constantly aiming at the same degree of excellence, thee may very closely follow her footsteps. She attained so much by always having a high standard about everything. I think there is not one in the family so like her in most things as thee art.

"I have no doubt but thy mind will be much im-

proved by having had to feel so deeply as thee hast the last few months: it will, by degrees, I believe, *stimulate* thee increasingly to seek the best things, and by this thy natural character will become softened, humbled, and harmonised; many latent powers will be called into action and unfolded; and thee will love us all just as much as ever, without that degree of dependence which, under any circumstances almost, must, from the nature of things in the course of life, be shaken. It is a good thing to have true *dignity* of character, by which I mean a superiority over even our best affections. This my mother had most eminently. I scarcely ever saw it more conspicuous in any one.

"I advise thee to be particularly watchful about what appear to be mere trifles with reference to dear Fowell. Louisa is an example in things of this kind, for she says as Sam gives up so much to her in great things, she feels it a duty to yield to him in all that does not concern her conscience, and she does it delightfully. Now, by gentleness of manner, giving up thy own inclinations to his in little things, being *amiable*, in short, thee might gain increasing influence over him. Also thee ought to do all thee can to make thyself pleasing to him in dress, manner, &c. All this is the more important from his being so young, and having given up so much to thee in very great things, and being really such a help and support to thee in the most important matters, where thy conscience is concerned. From the entire ease and familiarity of your terms, and from thy having a sort of playful teasing manner with thy equals (if thee knows what I mean), I think thee may not always be guarded enough in such

things as these. Now Louisa always seems to have the right thing uppermost towards Sam, and she says they are much happier with each other than they were the first two or three months after they married. I believe that being sometimes in a state of mental suffering about us and other things may really be a gain to thee, love, and by curbing thy spirit a little, and subduing thy will, will soften thee and unite thee, first to God, and then to thy husband. This consoles me very much for thy pains, for I sometimes think I feel them for thee almost as much as thee can do for thyself. I am truly encouraged about thy conduct, and often feel how good and patient thee has been under trials, and what an example thee may become to others. We must not be discouraged by a sense of our own weakness and deficiencies, for we are told that the strength of Christ is made perfect by *our* weakness, or something to that effect. Therefore the weaker we feel in ourselves, the more our affections ought to be fastened and centred on Him. How often we see characters, not very strong by nature, gain a power not their own, which seems to give them a new existence.

“It is very interesting to us to hear every particular of your life and to have a sketch of your cottage. I long to have you more within reach to supply you with a number of good things. I do not think, love, I shall write to thee again at present, as I am afraid of taking the place of the others, though I feel as if I *could* write almost every day.”

“Oct. 9, 1807.—Though I had not at all intended writing again so soon, thy long letter to Louisa has

drawn forth so much feeling for thee in my mind, that I must express to thee the encouragement and comfort it has given me with respect to thy present state. I do not want to praise thee, love, but I must tell thee how very highly I approve thy exertions to be what thee ought to be in thy present situation. Hearing such an account of thee gives me satisfaction of the best kind, and I cannot help admiring as well as loving thy efforts to fill up thy station with dear Fowell and his family so wisely and admirably. However, I do not wish to send thee an eulogium, but to encourage thee to persevere in doing thy part, and to express my sense of the blessing I feel it that thee hast been enabled to feel and to act, in the main, so very much as we all could wish; for after all, the merit is not to be ascribed to ourselves,—of that I hope we are all deeply sensible, so that I do not praise thee, but I *sympathise* with thee in the comfort of having been thus far so preserved and assisted.

“What a comfort it is, too, that thee hast been able to feel cheerfully about our present separation. Our feelings on such subjects do appear to be but little in our own power; still I believe that every real endeavour to attain the right disposition of mind is blessed in its consequences, and that this has been thy case; we are all disposed also to feel it cheerfully and submit to it willingly, which I hope, love, will be a help and strength to thee. Even at a distance, how very much we may assist each other, and how pleasant it is to feel this. As to often feeling weak in thyself, and very imperfect both in thy inward and outward actions, this thee must expect; and I believe that the greater advances we

make in Christianity, the more alive we shall be to our own great infirmities, but *the less cast down by them*. This I wish thee would bear in mind for thy encouragement, and endeavour not to mind a weak state when it besets thee. It is much more to thy real good than to have thy confidence unduly placed in thyself, confidence which must be shaken in us all. The state of thy spirits will vary. This thee must be prepared for, and learn to commit thyself in all states to that God who never fails to protect and bless, even in trials, those who place their whole dependence upon Him. What a good thing it is to learn thus humbly to commit ourselves, and also those who are dear to us, to Him : and how it helps us to bear many painful circumstances of our own and of those we love, and we must learn to bear the pains of others as our own. Thee sometimes speaks of feeling obscurity and deadness of mind about religious subjects. Of this most religious characters complain, and I fully believe it is no real cause of discouragement, but rather the reverse. Whatever experimentally teaches us our *natural* state of darkness and poverty is of use to us in the end : this I may say from what I have so deeply felt myself.

“As I said in my last letter, it comforts me to believe thee will be the better for the portion of suffering, under whatever form it may come, that thee may have to pass through. Rachel was saying yesterday she thinks in one way thee may know as much, if not more, about us individually, who are together, as we may of each other. It is so easy sometimes to communicate one’s inmost thoughts in writing, more so than in conversation, and by our all writing so fre-

quently, nothing of any importance can pass without thy knowing of it: this is a real pleasure. My father was quite pleased with some parts of thy letter to Louisa which we read to him. . . . Intellectual pursuits, now that thee hast time for them, are in my opinion of greater importance for thee than music or drawing, especially as Fowell has more taste for reading than for objects of taste. In other things, too, it is well to consider his mind as well as thy own, and the more of a companion thee can be to him the better.

"I hope, love, thee continues to take good care of thy body as well as mind, and does not over-fatigue thyself. For our sakes, as well as thy own, thee really *must*. I do not like to hear of thy taking such long walks, and waiting so very late for dinner; it is too exhausting for thee. Does thee always have a very good nooning<sup>1</sup> when thee art likely to wait so late? I do desire thee wilt for my sake. Pray do not neglect thyself in any way; the idea of thy doing so is very painful to me. Tell me thee always has a good nooning, and art very careful not to overtire thyself, and does thee *take care of the fire*? I wish thee would have a guard. I do not know that I have at present anything more particular on my mind about thee: I almost always have something I could write to thee every day.

"Rachel wrote so fully yesterday that there is not much narrative. Yesterday afternoon Rachel went with my father and our Sam to dine at Keswick with my uncle and Gatty Hanbury. Sally and Sophy arrived here to dinner and to go to the ball. Joseph wished so much to go with them, that we all thought it best he

<sup>1</sup> Luncheon.

should: so they set off about nine, and left Louisa, Cilla, Chenda, and me to enjoy thy sweet and interesting letter over the drawing-room fire till the party returned from Keswick. Our Sam did not care about the ball the least. I admire to see his steadiness: he is now in a sweet mind, and seems to enjoy being here, and is far more open than when he came. This morning everybody except me and my father went to church with William and Anne,<sup>1</sup> both looking very bridal, and every one else very nicely. I was not in the mind for going, as I wanted quiet at home. Anne looks very neatly in a very pretty gown we gave her. We are all going to dine at the Grove, and shall leave the Great Parlour to them and their company, and I think they will have a very pleasant day, and they will have a dinner-party of about thirty.

“We are going, when I have done this, to spend the morning together as usual in the dressing-room. Dear Louisa and Priscilla go to Cromer to-morrow with the two Sams. Their visit is principally to John and Elizabeth. I regret parting with dear Louisa very much, but I think it quite right she should go. Uncle Joseph has been here this morning. I will now bid thee farewell, dear Hannah, as I want to go to the others. I am sitting by the nursery-fire alone, and they are all, I believe, in the dressing-room. We had a comfortable letter from dear Betsy yesterday, where she expresses very encouraging feelings about thee and Fowell.”

“*October* 1807.—I am longing very much to hear

<sup>1</sup> Old servants.

of thee again. . . . Indeed, love, thee *must* write very often, or else I get into such an anxious state about thee, it is quite painful. I think about thee continually, and the personal separation from thee can only be *lightened* by hearing of thee all the particulars thee can possibly write. Writing to us ought for our sakes to be one of thy daily duties, and if thee has little time, thee might write a little every day, and in the course of a few days thee would fill a large sheet. I have been in rather a cloudy state of mind since I came home, but I am now getting more comfortable, and I daresay shall soon be quite cheerful again. I would not pass many more weeks without seeing thee again for a great deal. I set my mind on thy coming either to London or here before very long. I hardly know what to write to thee about thyself, not knowing exactly thy state of mind, but I hope and trust that by this time thee art getting a little above the pain of Priscilla's having left thee, and that thee and dear Fowell are enjoying being by yourselves whenever you can at any quiet time, which I fear is but rarely. Though thee must at times feel thy separation from us all, yet I think thee may always keep in view the *far higher* ties that are owing to a husband, and for his sake, as well as thy own, endeavour to have thy heart open to all the enjoyment thee can derive from thy present circumstances. This does appear most important, for how often we see that wives lose their influence, and at last a portion of their happiness, by indulging an anxious dissatisfied turn of mind. I am not much afraid of thy doing so, because I know thy principle against it, and I believe thee are both too wise and too fond of dear Fowell to do so, or



perhaps to feel any disposition to it. I believe thee hast done perfectly right in being left alone with him, and though to me all the present effect of separation must be painful, yet I believe, if we all take it as we ought to do, we shall be rewarded for it in the future. It is a comfort to feel that it cannot in the *least* degree diminish our sympathy and real union with each other, but, if possible, confirm them by putting them to the proof. This is a real consolation as respects ourselves, and then, as regards thee and Fowell, it is so highly desirable that thee should be devoted to him *first*, and make him more habitually thy *first* object, and it is so long before this sort of dependence can be fully transferred from one's own family to a husband, that it is most essential—as it is according to nature and religion—that it should be so. The love of a husband is different from any other friendship that might in any degree divide us from our own family. How many virtues are brought into action by married life! I am sure, if we make the right use of the occasion, we may become better and stronger by it. I recollect Betsy once saying how it had led her far more than she could have supposed possible almost, to *subjection of will*; this she said who appears so much the mistress in everything, and what an important lesson this is to learn! It is encouraging sometimes under the trials we meet with in every situation to be able to see in some degree the end and *benefit* of them, but there are many in which we must live entirely by *faith*, and not by *sight*.

“Yesterday we had a really comfortable day. My father dined out, and we four enjoyed being together at dinner. Dear John then came in on his way from

Northrepps to Lynn, coming round that he might see Hudson, who is ill. I long to send thee eatables and other useful articles, but I doubt if it would answer on account of the expense of carriage."

This was to be a year of rapid increase of the Gurney family and its connections, for in November 1807 John Gurney of Earlham wrote to his cousins James and Sarah Shepherd of Upton to ask permission for his son Samuel to address their daughter Elizabeth, an exceedingly pretty and attractive young woman. Mrs. Shepherd was by birth a Gurney, being one of the daughters of Henry Gurney of Norwich,<sup>1</sup> and sister of Bartlett Gurney, the founder of the Norwich Bank. Mr. and Mrs. Shepherd resided at Ham House in the parish

<sup>1</sup> These daughters were—

Elizabeth, wife of Joseph Cockfield of Upton: had issue—Henry Cockfield, who died unmarried, and Sarah, wife of Joseph Dimsdale. Her son, Joseph Cockfield Dimsdale, afterwards owned the Upton estate.

Sarah, wife of James Shepherd: had issue—James, Anna, and Elizabeth.

Martha, wife of John Birkbeck, who was a partner in the Lynn Bank, and lived at the old bank-house: had issue—Henry Birkbeck, afterwards a partner in the Norwich Bank, and Jane, first wife of Joseph John Gurney of Earlham, and mother of John Henry Gurney and of Anna, who married John Church Backhouse.

Lucy, wife of Thomas Aggs of Norwich: had issue—Thomas, Lucy (an intimate friend of Catherine Gurney), Hannah (wife of John Brightwen of Yarmouth), and Eliza (wife of John Geldart of Norwich).

Henrietta, died unmarried.

Maria, died unmarried.

of West Ham, Essex, and Samuel Gurney had become intimate with them from being with the Frys at Plashet.

“Samuel Gurney was charming in his attachment to Elizabeth Shepherd, and exceedingly in love with her, yet almost afraid to look at or be near her. She was an uncommonly pretty girl, and showed a tender, serious spirit, which was extremely winning. His attachment probably existed two or three years in secret.”—*Family Letters*.

“There was a sweet unselfishness in the natural disposition of Elizabeth Gurney, peculiarly endearing and instructive, a lowly estimation of herself, a charity to others, a faithfulness to duty, a power of sympathy most uncommon, which, as one of her children remarks, often led her into great trial, so truly did she suffer with those who wept, and whom she was ever ready to help and comfort.

“It is also beautiful to see how little, as riches increased, she set her heart upon them, how entirely free from a spirit of ostentation and display was her daily walk and conversation, and how her loving gentleness threw a beauty about her daily path.”—*Mrs. T. Geldart, “Memoir.”*

The marriage of Samuel Gurney and Elizabeth Shepherd took place at Barking Meeting-house on April 7, 1808, and the joyful welcome given to the bride in her husband's family was

cordially reciprocated by her. Elizabeth Fry's Journal says :—

“I was unable to attend the wedding, which I had so particularly desired. We had a very striking Meeting, and I did deeply feel for dear Samuel and Elizabeth, and desire that they might be blessed.

“The fat of the land was not my desire, but the dew of Heaven. They both felt most dear to me.”

Hitherto Samuel Gurney had only been a diligent apprentice or plodding clerk in his brother-in-law's counting-office.

“He was now about to enter life at a peculiar period in the history of the monied world. For, a very little time prior to Samuel Gurney's marriage an important branch of business had been commenced in the city of London, and one which had a marked effect on the commercial and banking interests of the country at large.

“Before the formation of the firm in Lombard Street afterwards well known under the name of Overend, Gurney & Co., there had been nothing at all analogous to the system pursued by money-dealers at present.

“At this time the city of Norwich carried on a very lucrative trade in woollen goods with India and China, under control of the East India Company ; and this may have been the means of introducing a connection between the Norwich Bank and Mr. Joseph Smith, a member of the Society of Friends, then



*Elizabeth Gurney*



engaged as a woollen factor in the city of London. The result of this intercourse was that Mr. Smith, having extensive dealings in his trade, was able to employ a large amount of the surplus money of the Norwich Bank in discounting the acceptances of his connections and others, for which he charged the bank the reasonable commission of one quarter per cent. on the amount of money thus negotiated. This business in course of time so increased, that a clerk of Mr. Smith's, John Overend, a North-Countryman of the greatest perseverance and considerable acuteness and shrewdness, proposed to Mr. Smith that he should be taken into partnership, and that they should establish a separate business as bill-brokers. This proposal being rejected, the clerk left the firm, and suggested to Mr. Thomas Richardson, then the principal clerk of the house of Smith, Wright & Gray, that they should start this new business on their own account. The principle on which it was to be conducted was somewhat novel, and its difference between this and the former mode was, that instead of charging the commission of one quarter per cent. to those who supplied the capital, they should charge it to those whose bills were discounted. This plan meeting with the approval of the Norwich Bank, one of the clerks, Simon Martin, subsequently a partner in the concern—a man of much practical knowledge, high principle, and steady perseverance in all that he undertook—was sent to London to assist in the formation of the new and untried business. And thus from so small a commencement arose the great concern of Overend & Co. It was in the year 1807, being the one previous to the marriage

of Samuel Gurney, that his father, John Gurney of Earlham, having already placed his eldest son in the branch bank at King's Lynn, with the prospect of a future partnership, embarked his second son, Samuel, in business on his own account; and as an indication of the well-deserved trust of the father, we may notice the fact that, at the early age of twenty-one, Samuel Gurney took no inconsiderable share in the concern of Richardson & Overend. How much of the safety and success of that vast establishment was due to his firm, clear, bold business talent from early youth, through a long course of years, through many anxieties and shocks, not a few brokers and bankers in London can testify."—*Memoir*.

After the marriage and establishment of Samuel had done much to withdraw him from Norfolk interests, Joseph John became more than ever the home brother of the Earlham sisterhood. His sister Hannah writes of how he had become increasingly one with the family circle :—

"As he grew older, he became more and more delightful to his father, and brothers, and sisters. His return home in the vacations was always a welcome event. His life and playfulness, his spirit and zeal in every pursuit, rendered his company most enlivening. He spent his holidays with great method, allotting much time to study, reading Latin with Louisa, books on serious subjects with Rachel, and would join with



our whole circle for amusing reading, drawing with us whilst listening. Greatly did he enjoy the various recreations of home ; especially our simple evening dances in the autumn, when it was our greatest pleasure to have our four brothers dancing with the four younger sisters. He would unite in forming a party for a cotillon, as well as in our many other projects for play or amusement.

“Catherine and Rachel also found in him one who could respond to all the pains they bestowed upon him, one full of deep affection for them, gladly accepting their care, their counsel, and their instruction. In no common degree did he appear to be free from temptation, and naturally inclined to all that was lovely and of good report. Ever on the right side, he had held and maintained the highest standard in conduct, and I may truly say that, as he grew in stature, he grew in grace, using all diligence in watching over his own heart, whilst pursuing the attainment of knowledge with unremitting diligence.”

In the early spring of 1808 the Buxtons were a long time at Earlham, and there, in “Mrs. Catherine’s chamber,” on February 25, their eldest child, Priscilla, was born.

The happiness of John and Elizabeth Gurney was unclouded, but of very short duration. In little more than a year, on the 12th of May 1808, the lovely and engaging wife died of decline. “Never,” writes Joseph John, “can I forget the solemn summer evening when our

sister's remains arrived at Earlham, the hearse slowly advancing to the house through the avenue of lime-trees. Never can I forget the overwhelming woe of our brother." John Gurney indeed never recovered the shock. Henceforward he found his only comfort in religion, in which he was helped by Edward Edwards, the friend of Charles Simeon and Henry Venn, who was a clergyman at Lynn.

Katherine, eldest daughter of Elizabeth Fry, wrote afterwards of this family sorrow :—

"Elizabeth Gurney was cut off at a period in which the large circle of brothers and sisters and cousins were very remarkably in the enjoyment of this world's highest prosperity—a circle brought up in intimate connection with each other, many just married or about to be so, and little acquainted with the trials of life. It suddenly arrested the stream of prosperity and earthly happiness of the family, in which such was the union, that if one of the members suffered, all the members suffered with it."

After this, Edward Edwards was frequently at Earlham, first as the friend of John, then as the friend of the whole family. We find him writing of Catherine Gurney :—

"Having been left, when only seventeen, to take care of this large family of four sons and seven

daughters, she had been a mother to them all, feeling a maternal solicitude for their temporal and spiritual welfare. Her truly Christian spirit might constrain even the most bigoted to acknowledge that God is not confined to any of our forms and parties. Even a little acquaintance with such excellent characters out of our own pale must take off the edge of intolerance and assuage all bitterness of party spirit."

Rachel Gurney's journal tells how :—

"*Earlham, June 1808.*—Mr. Edwards has been spending a week with us, and it is certain that his influence, his company and conversation, have had the effect of truly comforting and encouraging us in the best way. He has been the means of drawing forth all our hearts into some degree of religious communion. I could not have hoped before that people brought up with such different associations could have met so nearly both in judgment and feeling as we do. It may well be called the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, which we believe will be perfected in heaven."

Such, at one time, was Mr. Edwards' admiration of Catherine, that—with extreme diffidence—he was tempted to send her a proposal of marriage. It so happened that, being much engrossed with other things when it arrived, she slipped the letter into her pocket unread and forgot all about it. It was no sooner written than Mr. Edwards longed to recall it.

Much as he admired Catherine, mature consideration made him feel sure that in many ways they were unsuited for a life-companionship. At last he thought himself bound to communicate his change of feeling to her. One day she was walking down the drive at Earlham, when she saw Mr. Edwards approaching, looking very crestfallen and miserable. Suddenly she remembered the letter, was filled with remorse and told him so, and greatly was she surprised by the energy of his "Oh, then pray don't read it: pray destroy it unread." He married soon afterwards, and his wife fully shared his affectionate regard for the Earlham family. Mr. Edwards told Catherine Gurney years after, when they were very old friends, what the letter she never read had contained. It was always a great amusement to her.

It was, however, under the influence of Mr. Edwards that both Catherine and Richenda Gurney were, ere long, received into the Church of England, though Rachel herself remained for some time longer in the tenets of her fathers. As rules for her self-guidance at the Friends' Meeting she wrote about this time:—

"Let me go to Meeting in as collected a mind as possible, and, when there, let me humbly endeavour

to offer up my whole mind and heart to the Lord my God, by whose grace alone our worship can be made profitable. Let me not strain my mind to catch exalted or sublime thoughts, but in a lowly, contrite, penitent, broken spirit, prostrate myself before the Father of Mercies and seek His forgiveness and blessing.

"After Meeting, if I feel a blank, let me dwell upon some passage in Scripture with a devout heart. In this manner I think our silent Meetings may be blest to me. May I be temperate in everything and at all times, but more especially so after religious exercises, lest their good effects become scattered."

During these years, Elizabeth Fry had been feeling painfully how the cares of a household and the births of many children withheld her from the more general ministrations after which her heart longed; but on August 30, 1808, we find her writing from Earlham:—

"I have been married eight years yesterday. Various trials of faith and patience have been permitted me; my course has been very different from what I expected, and instead of being, as I had hoped, a useful instrument in the Church militant, here I am a careworn wife and mother, outwardly nearly devoted to the things of this life. Though at times this difference in my destination has been trying to me, yet I believe those trials that I have had to go through have been very useful, and brought me to a feeling sense of what I am; and at the same time have taught me where power is, and in

what we are to glory—not in ourselves, nor in anything we can be or do, but only to desire that He may be glorified, either through us or others, in our being something or nothing, just as He may see best for us.”

The letters of Catherine Gurney continue to show how the home influence which she had exercised at Earlham was carried on with her sisters when they had homes of their own.

CATHERINE GURNEY to HANNAH BUXTON  
(with illness in her family).

“*Earlham*, 1808.—I do not at all wonder at thee being tired. I trust thee art learning more and more to cast thy care upon the Lord, who will sustain thee, and who, no doubt, is watching over you all for good, even in the midst of the trials He is pleased to appoint in order to bring thee nearer to Himself. I have earnestly desired that the pains you have lately suffered may have this most happy effect, that they may strengthen thy dependence upon God, quicken thy faith and diligence, and unite thee and Fowell more than ever to each other. How desirable it is that we should constantly keep in view the *end* of God’s chastisements, let them come under whatever form they may; that we may regard life more and more as *only* a state of discipline to improve and mature us for the better inheritance that passeth not away. When these thoughts of life and eternity become habitually impressed on the mind, sorrow loses its sting, and though nature may suffer, Grace will make us rejoice ever more under all the

dispensations of Providence. The real difficulty seems to be to gain this continual sense of God's presence and government over us, so that we may truly *feel* that we are constantly upheld and protected by Him. And this can only be done by *actual* devotion, setting apart as much time as we possibly can for retirement from the world and prayer to God—not only for meditation and self-examination, but *prayer*. Thus the truth as it is in Jesus will become fixed in the heart, and bring forth fruit to His glory and to our own unspeakable consolation: we shall then be enabled to run with patience the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith: our affections will be set on things above, not on things on the earth. Oh, if thee art oppressed with care, leave all things and cast thyself at His feet."

"*Anteroom, Earlham, 1808.*—I cannot say how I long to see thee and dearest Louisa again, yet I am not the least disconcerted about the possibility—I fear probability—of thy not coming. I am determined to submit with patience if it should be necessary, and to look on the good side about thy present confinement to London. I do hope, love, thee wilt follow my example. When I compare my own feelings about thee now, dearest Hannah, with what they were last year, I feel how much reason I have to be thankful, though we may perhaps be crossed in this instance. Yet what a blessing it is to have thee settled in London, within reach of us if anything important should happen, and close to dear Betsy and Louisa. When I compare the past about thee with the present, I cannot

but rejoice in spite of some privations, and especially in thinking that dear Fowell has a secure prospect, one that on the whole suits him. Indeed, love, we ought none of us to complain, but, on the contrary, to be thankful. What a blessing it is that thee art as happy and as wanted as thee art, that thy little darling is restored to thee. If we sometimes considered how unworthy we are of all our comforts, it would enhance their value, and teach us to submit more willingly than we do to the privations that are no doubt sent to us for our chastisement. Let us endeavour to look upon them as merciful dispensations rather than as causes of discontent. Having the best things of this world sometimes withheld from us leads us to place our hope on that which is still beyond them. If we were not crossed in those things which appear to us to be the best, what exercise would there be of the principle of submission?

"However, after all, perhaps we may meet for a short time in the course of the autumn. I do not by any means despair of it. I long for the refreshment of seeing thee, love, and dearest Louisa, and your very dear husbands (for so they both are to me), and the darling babies. I feel the greatest interest in you all *six*, and if thee cannot come, love, thee may be sure I shall not be long without coming to thee: so thee may console thyself a little.

"How I do wish, dearest Hannah, thee may be preserved against that over-carefulness I mentioned to thee. It appears to me almost thy *first* duty to guard against it. Dear Fowell has it not at all in his composition, and I think thy giving way to it may be a serious inroad on your mutual happiness. It is a



thing he never could enter into, and would, I have no doubt, both dislike and disapprove. Indeed, love, thee art rather *too* fond of us and Earlham. Thee does not sufficiently *decidedly* prefer dearest Fowell and all his interests, your mutual objects and your own home. I do earnestly wish thee to give up thy heart to him more and more in *preference* to any of us. What *very* high duties are those of a married woman! how strongly they are set forth in Scripture!—do bring this home to thy mind. I believe many pains would sit lighter upon thee. I feel thy real and lasting interests, my love, and dearest Fowell's too, so *very* far beyond any present gratification about having thee with us, and so should thee, and I believe thee will more and more. I long to encourage and confirm thee in thy duties as wife, mother, and mistress of a family, and let us endeavour to leave the rest to Him who knows well how to provide for us all according to our various necessities. We may be *sure* of His merciful protection if we sincerely endeavour to do our part—that 'hard things will be made easy to us, and bitter things sweet.' How glad I am that I can still be a comfort to thee, my beloved sister. There is hardly anybody in the world I feel such a tender interest for as for thee *individually*; thee comes as near my heart as any human thing can possibly do, and more constantly near than almost any one. I do hope it may often be my lot to comfort and help thee, and be with thee whenever thee really wants me. How earnestly I do desire and pray for thy good! You four are equally dear to me, but I have a particular feeling of tenderness for thee, and it is very

much awakened at this moment in consequence of thy letter.

"Dear John has been all the better lately for a necessity to exert himself. His horses and tandem are quite a pleasure to him. It is wonderful to see him in *that* room, lying on that very sofa, in a state of calmness, and not near so low as you might suppose, but—his weakness still continues.

"Pray, dears, all four of you, do get Dr. Paley's Sermons and read them: they are *super*-excellent, and would just suit you."

After receiving this letter we find Hannah, Mrs. Buxton, writing in her journal:—

"*August* 1808.—A letter from Catherine has impressed my mind, and made me consider the necessity there is that I should encourage a cheerful and easy state of mind and not give way to anxiety. I believe that I and all I love are under the immediate and most merciful providence of God, and that His allotments for us are all wise and good, and that must, if it become a principle in my heart, be a sure foundation for contentment and cheerfulness. I have often strongly felt how wrong it is to allow the least murmuring and discontent, and to give way to a gloomy and careful state is carefully to be guarded against. 'Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks.'"

"*Dec.* 31, 1808.—The clock is now striking the end of 1808. Oh, that we may all be led more devoutly

to seek the glory of God, and that above everything. I feel an inexpressible love for my dearest father and all my most beloved brothers and sisters: for each I am almost overwhelmed with deep affection this evening. Oh, that our union may be in Christ, that it may be sweet and everlasting! I feel my separation from them, and the loss to us all which this year has brought with it,<sup>1</sup> and I have not often been more feelingly sensible of it than to-night; but my desires for the good of none have been equal to what I have felt for my own dearest husband. His welfare is indeed near to my heart. How earnestly do I desire that our union may, during the new year, become strengthened by an increase of grace in us both."

In January 1809 the Buxtons settled in a City of London home, near their brewery in Brick Lane. Dull as it was in situation, it soon became another pleasant family centre. When the Earlham sisters visited London, Catherine and Priscilla usually stayed with Hannah in Brick Lane, Rachel and Richenda with Elizabeth Fry in St. Mildred's Court.

CATHERINE GURNEY to HANNAH BUXTON.

"*Lynn, Jan. 7, 1809.*—How sweet thy affection to me is, love, and how I could long to have thee more under my wing. Thee and I, as far as I can see, *ought* to live near together; but that all is ordered for us aright I

<sup>1</sup> Of her sister-in-law, Elizabeth.

have not the smallest doubt, however much I should enjoy having thee always with or near me. There is not one of the family from whom I regret absence so much as from thee. How I should like once more, dearest Hannah, to be a support and comfort to thee. I often feel very painfully being so much occupied with my own concerns, and long to be at liberty in mind to enter more fully into all your concerns and to be more active amongst you. I may often say, 'I groan, being burthened,' by the work that is going on in my own mind. Still I ought not to say that this has been the case lately, for I have been so sweetly and encouragingly helped along in the midst of all my infirmities since I came here,<sup>1</sup> that my faith and hope are, I trust, confirmed by what I have lately experienced. I think you all fancy me more unsettled than I am. It is true my mind has undergone some considerable change on secondary points within the last few months, but the *root* of faith and dependence is, I believe, unshaken through all, and even confirmed by the great pain I have at times passed through. You ought not to be at all anxious about me. I feel, I am thankful to say, secure as to the foundation of hope, though now and then tried upon secondary points. I could long to tell thee, dearest Hannah, every particular about myself, and to hear as much of thy concerns. I am in some respects happier here than at home, for I have plenty of time for rest both of body and mind. Rachel is such a help and comfort; she and John and I are much united, and though dear John is often a good

<sup>1</sup> By the Rev. E. Edwards and others, who were leading her from Quakerism to the Church of England.

deal shut up, he is at others sweetly open and affectionate. He is certainly more reconciled to Lynn than he was. Our union with our friends (the Edwards) is very strong and sweet, different in kind as well as degree from any friendship we ever had before. I never was in any place that satisfied me so completely as their house; we are so perfectly easy with each other. She is all sweetness and kindness and generosity to us; how much thee would love them both if thee knew them as we do. Our own house is very snug and comfortable.

"I wonder when thee will be settled in Brick Lane. I think I must come to see thee there before long. I dread entering London, or else I am sure I could not keep away from thee."

Rachel Gurney adds:—

"Our intercourse with the Wordsworths through Priscilla's letters has been a great source of enjoyment to me ever since I left them. Our love for the Edwards does not the least interfere with this tie, though our connection with them is closer natured. It is close indeed, which thee and dear Louisa would most fully unite with and enter into, could you be with them as we are."

CATHERINE GURNEY to HANNAH BUXTON.

"*Lynn, March 7, 1809.*—It does seem very long to be separated a year, but perhaps, love, we may meet sooner, though we do not expect it; and if not, time glides away even before we are aware of it; and so, as

we are both going on happily, we ought to be thankful and contented. Thee must have felt Louisa's coming into Norfolk, but I am glad she is at Earlham for my father's sake. I rather hope thee will not go to the opera with Martha; it is so much better not to begin in a family any habit of the kind for all your sakes; though it might not do thee individually harm for once, it is very difficult to draw the line. However, thee and Fowell are fully equal to judge what is best.

"The days here are never long enough, there is so much to fill them. The society we are in exactly suits my mind and taste. Our Monday evening parties are quite a treat to me—the Edwards, Hankinsons, Wincups, and ourselves. Mr. Edwards and Mr. Hankinson are the chief persons in our society, and it is pleasant to me to hear them talk on interesting subjects, and in the whole party there is no affectation or unmeaning profession. I am on easy terms with them all, and never felt so much at home with people I have known so short a time. They satisfy me more than any I ever was with—intellect, cultivation, and religion all united, and a view of religion which I am enabled once more to enter into. What a blessing this sometimes is to me I cannot express. It is my earnest and constant prayer that I may be enabled to devote my whole self to the one thing needful, and to possess it in that way which appears to me most according to the *whole* truth of the Gospel. The standard in the Church is so enlarged, comprehensive, and scriptural, none I think can know fully what it is but those who have really entered into it as I have done lately. . . . To see any glimpse of light after the clouds I have had

is to me so cheering that I am perhaps apt to delight in it more than I ought. I hope that my now seeing something that you at present do not may not be a discouragement to any of you in your own path ; persevere as far and according to what you see, and more will be shown you in time somehow or other, and, while they last, bear clouds and discouragements from the imperfection of outward means, with patience and resignation."

"*Earlham, June 24, 1809.*—I strongly recommend, dearest Hannah, thee keeping thy mind at rest about the future. Nothing can answer less than the needless perplexity we are all apt to feel about future plans in which we are much interested. We seldom accomplish our point at all the better for harassing ourselves beforehand ; on the contrary, we only weaken ourselves by it and often lose the object we wish to attain by over-carefulness. I have no doubt but that thy Norfolk visit will be managed satisfactorily when the time comes, and I advise thee by all means to divert thy attention from the subject as much as thee can, and to enjoy the present.

"We are going on very comfortably. My father is better than when he first came home, and it is a comfort to have Rachel back, and I have been remarkably happy lately in my own mind. A good deal of my time is spent in teaching the P.'s, who are still at Earlham. French and Natural History are my two branches, and it often puts me in mind of teaching all of you, they are so much of the same age, and about the same cleverness. I have not much time for any

reading, except the Bible, which perhaps is quite as well for me.

“Now I must give thee a lecture. As thee are likely to have children to educate, I really think it is of consequence for thee to take more pains with writing and spelling. Two words are spelt wrong in thy last letter, and the style is most inelegant, and even incorrect. Pray profit by these hints.”

The beloved father of the Gurney family died at Earlham, from the effects of an operation, on October 28, 1809. He had always said that he regarded the harmony which existed between himself and his numerous children as the greatest of his earthly blessings, and he was deeply loved by them. On the last day of his life he fell asleep, and awoke saying that he had been to heaven in a beautiful dream, and that he had seen all his children there with him.<sup>1</sup> When his life was despaired of, all the absent members of the family had been summoned. Mrs. Fry, who hurried with Richenda Gurney from London, writes:—

“Hearing at the different stages on the road that my dearest father was living, we proceeded till we arrived at Earlham about twelve o'clock on the night of the 26th, and once more we saw him who has been so inexpressibly dear to me through life, since I

<sup>1</sup> Rachel's journal.





*John Guernsey of Eastham*

*From portrait by Chas.*



knew what love was. He was asleep, but death was strongly marked on his sweet, and to me beautiful face. Whilst in his room all was sweetness, nothing bitter. He frequently expressed that he feared no evil, but believed that he should be received through the mercy of God in Christ. He spoke in the most affecting manner of his dear Catherine, who was gone before him. He encouraged us, his children, to hold on our way, and sweetly told us of his belief that our love of good (in the way we had it) had been a stimulus and help to him.

"The next morning he died, quite easily. I was not with him, but on entering his room soon after it was over, I could hardly help uttering my thanksgiving and praise, and also what I felt for the living as well as the dead: my heart was so full that I could hardly hinder utterance."

Rachel writes in her journal:—

"I cast myself on my knees by the bedside of the departed, and was deeply engaged in the conflict of prayer for us all, but at this time more closely for myself, that I might be enabled at this awful period to renew the solemn covenant with my God, afresh to dedicate myself to His service, and that I might be passive in His power, bowing with full submission of soul to His dispensations, and that I might never be influenced to flinch from any burden that might now be cast upon me, either from within or without. Having been thus exercised in prayer, I found some relief."

The whole family collected at Earlham for the funeral, where, kneeling by her father's open grave, his daughter Elizabeth gave public



THE GILDENCROFT, NORWICH.

thanks for the merciful manner of his release, this being her "first public offering in the ministry." An eye-witness describes the scene in the old Quaker burial-place of the Gildencroft—a green oasis in the heart of the

densely red-roofed town, where the grave-stones of the Gurneys and their connections, all exactly alike, have now gathered rank upon rank, like the lines of an advancing army:—

“Nearly all the family were present, Catherine composed throughout, but Richenda sobbing audibly. It was truly affecting to see Dan in the Meeting-house, scarcely able to support himself, leaning on the coffin with one arm, and holding up his sobbing sister Priscilla with the other. I cannot express how touching Mr. Joseph Gurney’s simple address was. . . . Just before the first earth was thrown into the grave, Mrs. Fry threw herself forward in the attitude of prayer, and, supported by her husband and sister, and almost choked by emotion, loudly prayed to be endued with thankfulness under affliction.”

To the Quaker mind such a ceremony was inexpressibly touching. But the publicity, the almost worldliness, of such funerals in the Gildencroft made a painful impression upon the youngest member of the family, Daniel, who had now gone to work in the bank at Lynn, where he lived with his brother John at a small house in Dallinger’s Row. Daniel Gurney writes:—

“Particularly painful and devoid of religious comfort were the funerals—the multitudes attending—the

exhibition, as it were, of the family—and the preaching of men and women. These made a strong and early impression on my mind, and they contributed—perhaps not rightly—to estrange me from the Society of Friends.”

## VI

### THE SECOND PHASE OF EARLHAM

“The past of mankind does not now seem a black ocean covered with fog and storm and wrecks drifting everywhere, but a long wake of light crosses it, coming from the Light that lighteth every man in the world, the *Pharos* of humanity—the Spirit of God. In that gleam the nations have steered their barks and made towards haven. He hath not left Himself without a witness.”—CHARLES LORING BRACE.

So much of the habits of Friends still lingered in the Gurney family, that most of the sons and daughters of John Gurney do not appear to have worn mourning for their father. Catherine Gurney, who, with her father's full consent, had been baptized in Bocking Church two months before his death (Sept. 5, 1809), records the pain it gave her to be the only one of the family “in deep mourning” for that occasion. She had decidedly united herself to the Church, as had her sister Richenda. On the other hand, Priscilla and Joseph were now more than ever “Friends,” while Rachel was not inclined to espouse decided outward forms in either direction, though most earnestly

seeking "the better part." We find her writing—

"*Nov.* 1807.—I have lately felt no good or sufficient reason for appearing, as a Quaker, so different from other people, and have doubted whether it is worth while to adopt any further singularity than true moderation and perfect modesty would lead to."

Very vividly did the memory of the beloved father remain with his children :—

RICHENDA GURNEY *to* ELIZABETH FRY.

"*Nov.* 30, 1809.—It is surprising how all things pass away, one scene so quickly succeeding another that there seems little trace left—such a stamp of mortality rests upon everything here! I was almost present with my beloved father last night, so clearly did I see him in my sleep. I dreamt that I was going down Magdalen Street, and met him with his quick walk and thoughtful yet cheerful countenance, as we have so often seen him. I could scarcely afterwards bring to my mind the painful reality that he was gone, and that we could never enjoy again the happiness of being with him, or seeing that countenance which has so often inspired comfort and delight to his children. His image is so often before me in so lively a manner, that it is almost like being with him. There is a comfort in dwelling on every little particular about him. How inexpressibly dear will the recollection of him ever be to me! He was indeed the most beloved of parents!"



CATHERINE GURNEY to HANNAH, MRS. BUXTON.

"May 21, 1810.—Alone in my own room as usual. I cannot but rejoice that thy heart is as thee describes it to be, so much in thy present important scene of action: it can hardly be too much so if thy first hope and consolation are fixed on things above. This we must all seek in the first place—'Seek ye *first* the kingdom of heaven, and all other things shall be added to you.' And, in proportion as we feel the extreme imperfection of all earthly objects, surely we shall make this our grand aim, and remember that for the attainment of this end we are to give all diligence. Then, that our hearts may be more effectually weaned from the world, we must prepare ourselves to meet with suffering as we pass through this wilderness—'Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind, for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh, and to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.' In this light we ought to view *all* the trials and vexations of the present life, let them come under what forms they may; and I wish, dearest Hannah, thee mayst be enabled to do so. I do not at all wonder at thee having melancholy feelings about Earlham; considering the impressions under which thee left us, it would be strange if thy mind was not frequently filled by sorrowful recollections and a painful sense of separation in our present objects. I believe these pains would be very much removed could thee see how comfortably we are going on, and how great a degree of

cheerfulness is restored to the house. I wish thee could endeavour to look upon us in this point of view, rather than dwell on the mournful side; and as to separation, I do not think there can be any *real* separation where we are all united, as I believe we are, under one great Head, who will preserve our union for us. If we were ever so much separated in person and in earthly pursuits, I consider that we are in fact *indissolubly* united by the only tie which can last, or which can have any security. And the more we can cling to the spiritual tie, and that only, the more peace we shall have, and the less disturbance from outward circumstances of any kind. Therefore I would have thee take comfort, dearest Hannah, from the solid grounds of faith and hope, which cannot be shaken except by our own fault or folly. If we fix our attention on the events of life, without considering them only as the means of trial and discipline through which it is the appointment of God that we should pass, we can never obtain that rest which, even here in measure, is promised to the people of God. How beautiful is that Collect in which the Church thus expresses itself—‘O Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men; grant unto Thy people that they may love the thing which Thou commandest, and desire that which Thou dost promise; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be *fixed*, where true joys are to be found, through Jesus Christ our Lord.’

“As I long to be of some help to thee, love, and to cheer thee if I can, I must open to thee a little on what I am sure is the only source of strength and consola-

tion, for it is quite in vain to look to the creatures to comfort us—'Every creature is that to us, and no more than God makes it to be;' therefore in whatever way or degree the creatures are the cause of disappointment to us, we may believe that it is a means of fixing us more firmly on the Creator. There are many stages in our Christian progress in which we may have much suffering to pass through in order that by degrees our *whole* trust and confidence and dependence may be placed on God. We are to 'lean only on the hope of His heavenly grace'—His grace in Christ Jesus to pardon and accept us, as undeserving and unprofitable servants, and the grace of His Holy Spirit to cleanse us from unrighteousness and make us 'meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.'

"Altogether, I like my church here quite as much as that at Lynn, and feel it best for me to learn not to depend on any individual. I have generally very comfortable Sundays. I usually feel quite taken out of the cares of life for the day. As I become more accustomed to the Church Service, I find it lead to much *collection of mind*; but for this and all other good things I am sensible that I am wholly dependent on the daily supplies of Divine grace, and that unless 'the Lord vouchsafe to build the house, their labour is but vain that build it.' And I have still many valleys and many clouds to pass through, but my Heavenly Master guides me through them all, and will, I trust, keep me to the end.

"I had not intended to say anything about myself, for I always am afraid of unsettling your mind, but I hope it will not have this effect, and I can truly say

my only wish for you is that you may be strengthened to *hold fast* to that which appears to you to be the right path. Various are the ways and means by which the hearts of men are brought to God, but if we are only brought to devote ourselves to His service, we ought not to be over-anxious about the means, but leave this to Him in implicit faith and confidence that the disposals of His Providence cannot but be good.

"Chenda now lives more than half her time at the Wordsworths', but she is so useful that we cannot regret it."

RACHEL GURNEY to HANNAH, MRS. BUXTON.

"*Earlham, June 22, 1810.*—Catherine's mind seems to be quite at rest now, and she appears to me to be very much confirming and confirmed in her present path, which is a very decided one. I have a firm and perfect trust that while we both and all faithfully strive to walk with and follow our God, according to our measure of knowledge and light received, performing His service in truth, and dead to all the allurements of the world, we shall still be helps rather than hindrances to each other. If dear Catherine's feelings should at any time be in opposition to my own, which must sometimes be the case, I hope as much as possible to bear in mind and to follow my father's tender and liberal conduct towards her. It is my prayer to become more subjected and less self-willed, for most true it is that the 'poor in spirit' even here partake of the kingdom of heaven. I have now and then the sweet experience of being brought to the feet of my Lord and Master, and then I could wish never to busy myself

in the various interests of the present life, which are too apt to engross and *perplex* one.

"It is delightful to see Chenda so diligent in the pursuit of her duties, and her heart so united to what is good, and yet without pain or conflict from within or without. Dear Joseph's course is not entirely cloudless, though it is rare to see a young man so truly seeking and *preferring* the Christian path as he does. I often think of him and Sam together as peculiar comforts and helps, and scarcely know which to rejoice over the most; only that Sam has secured so desirable and sweet a wife, and much may yet depend upon Joseph's further choice in this respect. John and Dan, equally dear, are rather more sources of tender care as well as of affection.

"Thou mayst imagine me sitting in the Blue Room; my retired hours are spent there or in my closet. I feel a peculiar attachment to this room, and something like a solace in being here. The study-green, and indeed all the garden, look in great perfection. The visit from our dear friends the Edwards was, as usual, a cordial to us all. I think, with the exception of my earliest attachments, no one beyond my nearest connections was ever so dear to me as they are, and if I mistake not, the love I feel for them would outlive almost any, perhaps *any*, changes of circumstances."

CATHERINE GURNEY to MRS. BUXTON and MRS. HOARE.

"*Earlham, August 20, 1810.*—We have been endeavouring, dearest Hannah and Louisa, to get settled into our usual places against you all come to us. I expect you will feel very much coming here again, but

I hope you will stay long enough to get over the pain in a great degree. The place looks delightfully, and when you have been here long enough, you will be able to feel it still cheerful as well as comfortable. I do not feel as if I could write much. We want *being together* for communication. I spend my time very comfortably. The first two or three hours of every morning I am shut up in my own room over the Bible, then I endeavour to be as active as I can for the rest of the day. I read much to myself in my leisure hours, but I do not make any point of it, as I no longer feel the want of the sort of study I used to be occupied by, except the Scriptures."

HANNAH BUXTON'S JOURNAL.

"Nov. 18, 1810.—Nothing can be more striking than to recur to the days of our childhood, which I have done this afternoon. Now to have father, mother, and nurse all taken from us, and to be ourselves occupying the situations they then held, and to have children coming on, who are in the same way to succeed us, how I desire that we may follow their footsteps. My most beloved and honoured father, how inexpressibly dear is thy memory to me! My mother, too, what tenderness, indulgence, and care I received from her. How sweet it is to consider they are again united. It is indeed delightful to have had such parents, and what a stimulus I feel to become like them. . . .

"The death of our most dear friend and nurse<sup>1</sup> was an acute sorrow, taken so suddenly from amongst us.

<sup>1</sup> Sarah Williman, who died at Lynn in 1809 of scarlet fever, caught in nursing Daniel Gurney through the disease.

Her heart was overflowing with affectionate zeal for us and our children, and her whole life devoted to the promotion of our immediate comfort. We knew not how to part with her, but great was the consolation which the thought of her sweet, useful, innocent life gave to us. She was indeed a shining example to all about her."

CATHERINE GURNEY to HANNAH, MRS. BUXTON.

"*Northrepps, Nov. 29, 1810.*—I am writing in Anna's room at Northrepps, while she is busy on the floor as usual. I very much enjoy being here. I had a comfortable ride here on Sunday with my uncle and aunt, and found Sarah and Anna very glad to see me, and it has been a great pleasure to see both my pupils going on so well. Sarah now makes the study of the Scriptures her first object, and besides this she is hard at work at Greek with Anna.<sup>1</sup> I should never be surprised at her becoming a very superior character; there are no common materials to be turned to account in her. She and I spend two or three hours together in the first part of every morning, and I have scarcely ever enjoyed so much reading with any one else, and in the latter part of the morning she and Anna and I read something else together. I scarcely ever had two pupils so *rich* mentally, or so interested in all our pursuits; it is quite a treat to me to be with them.

"It is a real comfort to me also to be with my uncle and aunt. My uncle declines perceptibly, and is in a sweeter state of mind than I have ever seen him in

<sup>1</sup> Sarah, sister of Fowell Buxton, had come to live with her mother's sister, Mrs. Gurney of Keswick, and her lame daughter Anna. After Mrs. Gurney's death the cousins remained together at Northrepps Cottage, where they were known as "the Cottage Ladies."

before—so contented under his infirmities, though fully aware of the decline of all his powers. My aunt's conduct to him is quite an example."

In the spring of 1809, after the death of her father-in-law, Elizabeth Fry had removed with her family to Plashet, a change which was very delightful to her. Here her enjoyment was great of all the natural beauties of her home, and in showing her children how to make the happiest use of them. She began at once to devote herself to the establishment of schools and the systematic help of the poor around her. Her daughter Rachel wrote long afterwards—

"Would that I could bring before you our mother as she was when we first lived at Plashet. The gentle firmness of her rule; the sober gracefulness of her carriage; her exceeding love and tenderness towards her little children, especially during their infancy; the cheerful invigorating influence she maintained over us; her care of her domestics, mental and bodily; her systematic attention to the poor.

"There was our school-room, where we were with the kind governess who laboured in succession with us all. Then our brothers set forth upon their ponies to the vicarage, whither for some time they went daily for instruction, and after that plan was abandoned, to their tutor, at the cottage by the end of the green walk. The nursery came next, controlled by those whom our mother had herself first taught and trained at Earlham,



thus in the care taken of her children, and in their singularly happy childhood, reaping the fruit of her own early labours. Household matters, correct account-keeping, the oversight of East Ham School, regular visits to the poor, and social duties all followed in succession. Happy were we when summoned to accompany her into the village, but happier still if 'Irish Row' was to be our destination. Whether it was the noise and dirt and broad Irish accent, or the little ragged sunburnt children who crawled before the doors, I know not, but charming it certainly was.

"Invocations to 'Madame Fry' to 'step in here,' beseechings to go elsewhere; requests, petitions, wants, desires; whilst children, pigs, and poultry joined their voices to the general clamour, formed a never-to-be-forgotten scene, and all this contrasted with her gentle voice and quiet decision, either granting, or refusing, or promising to consider what was asked. Her ready sense of the droll was often excited on these expeditions. I can see her now, with a look of irresistible amusement, seated in Molly Malony's room, on a pail reversed for the occasion, dusted with the last remnant of Molly's apron, who meanwhile, with black dishevelled locks, chased children and chickens, screaming and fluttering, from the potato-heap in one corner to the pile of straw in the other, in the vain hope of dislodging them from her apartment.

"By degrees, our mother's influence amongst her poor Irish neighbours became apparent. The Roman Catholic priest was won over to many of her plans. Bibles were circulated freely, several learned to read, and, without interference with their peculiar faith, they

gradually discovered that good conduct and sobriety had their reward.

"About the time of Fairlop Oak Fair, the gypsies attracted into the neighbourhood by it encamped in the green lane. Our mother generally visited them; gave clothing to some of the old people and children, medi-



PLASHET HOUSE.<sup>1</sup>

cine, and advice to the weakly, tracts and Bibles to those who would accept them. She would press upon the tawny mother her duties towards her children even in her wandering life, till, as some chord was touched in a heart that still responded to instincts of natural

<sup>1</sup> From a sketch by Miss Katherine Fry.

affection, she would weep as she listened to the pleadings addressed to her. For the scowling hard-visaged man our mother had also a grave, gentle word, and would conclude by reminding her hearers that the ear of God was as fully open to receive a prayer from a hedger side as from the house of a rich man.

"Another pleasure of those happy days was helping our mother to plant primroses and violets in the shrubberies and plantations at Plashet. Whether a cart-load of roots had been brought from the forest, or some of her seedlings were ready for transplantation, the occasion was a joyful one for us. Our mother; Sally Atterton, whose Norfolk love of primroses almost equalled her own; Denis Regan, with his spade, basket, trowel, and watering-pot, and our party was complete.

"Our mother's skilful though uncultivated touch in drawing added much to the pleasures of our winter evenings, providing us with little copies or subjects of design, whilst our father read aloud. Then came the parting word, and with it the Bible and the evening psalm before we separated."

Another of the family writes:—

"One of the servants told me that Mrs. Fry once lent a poor woman her own cow, when the woman wanted extra milk for sale; and when her husband saw it driven out of Plashet Gate he said, 'My dear, what *will* be lent next?'"

When Elizabeth Fry paid a cottage visit, she would take the baby on her knee and talk to it as only mothers can. She had the

pleasantest way of conversing with children. She once asked one of them, "Who makes your bread?" and the child answered, "The baker's man," and then she led the child on step by step until she said, "And who made the seed?"

Her brother Joseph John Gurney has written of her :—

"After all, those loved my sister Elizabeth best who knew her most in her private life. She was truly an attached and devoted wife, a cherishing and cherished mother, a loving and grateful sister, a dispenser of the true balm of Christian comfort in every hour of need to her intimate associates and friends. Her love, which flowed so freely towards mankind in general, assumed a concentrated form towards the individuals of her own immediate circle. There was not one of them who did not live in her remembrance; not one who would not acknowledge her as an especial friend, a helper and sustainer in life. Delightful was her conversation in the family group, whether at her own dwelling, or in those of her relations; always fixing the attention, always soothing the feelings; always tending to virtue and happiness, to love, peace, and union.

"She was an ardent lover of the beauties of nature, and observed them with delight in their smaller as well as in their larger features. A shell by the seaside, a feather, or a flower, would fill her heart with joy and tune her tongue to praise, while she gazed on it as an evidence of Divine wisdom, skill, and goodness. It was, indeed, a remarkable feature in her character

that she was as complete in the *little* as in the *great* things of life ; as successful in matters of a subordinate nature as in those of higher moment. She cared for the bodies of her friends as kindly and skilfully as for their souls. She was the refuge of those around her in *every* trouble, whether more or less important, and knew how to satisfy all who came to her, and all to whom she came."

In Mrs. Fry's eyes perhaps the greatest charm of Plashet was its close neighbourhood to her brother Samuel—son and brother in one—and to his wife and children, to whom she was most tenderly devoted.

"All who knew Upton and its surroundings—pleasant beyond belief of those who never saw it—and think only of its proximity to the busy world of London, will readily enter into the pleasures of the little colony, which, in process of time, formed around Ham House, an unpretending dwelling in the small park at Upton, and possessing a home-like old English beauty of its own.

"There was not an approach to grandeur, or even stateliness in the mansion. It was just such a place as a weary traveller would feel a longing to enter, sure of comfort within its walls ; and as he peeped through the park gates, and saw groups of children playing freely under the shadow of a spreading tree, or perhaps a little band of Sunday-scholars, blanched and sickly, as children from Stratford and Bow are likely to be, seated in quiet enjoyment of the milk and buns

provided for their school-treat within the enclosure, and merry boys playing cricket on the grass, he would feel tempted to enter too, and would be sure that the owner of Ham House was no churlish inhospitable man, but a thorough-going 'old English gentleman.' And then the quaint, irregular building of the house looked so inviting, with its many chimneys sending up their wreaths of curling smoke; the walled-in kitchen gardens, with all their tempting abundance; the friendly tone of the door-bell; the peep of the fine cedars and sloping lawns; the conservatory, opening out of the familiar green-house parlour; the dining-room, neither too large and dreary, nor too small and cramped; the drawing-room, furnished with the simple elegance characterising the homes of Friends; the warm, snug, curtained bedrooms, with their pleasant look-out on to garden and park; the nurseries, seldom silent—all spoke a welcome.

"A bright centre was Ham House, around which other members of the family instinctively gathered, as though for protection and shelter. Close by was the dwelling of Mrs. Gurney's only brother, to whose children, early left motherless, the kindly watchfulness of that judicious, tender-hearted aunt must have been an inestimable blessing. Then, a little farther still, amid fine trees, and overlooking a beautiful and extensive lawn, stood Plashet House."

From Plashet, Mrs. Fry wrote to her elder daughters, who had been spending a year under the care of their Aunt Rachel at Runcton:—

"*Oct. 27, 1810.*—I anxiously hope that you will now do your utmost in whatever respects your education, not only on your own account, but for our sake. I look forward to your return with much comfort, as useful and valuable helpers to me, which you will be much more if you will get forward yourselves. I see quite a field of useful service and enjoyment for you, if we are favoured to meet under comfortable circumstances in the spring. I mean that you should have a certain department to fill in the house, amongst the children and the poor, as well as your own studies and enjoyments. I think that there was not often a brighter opening for two girls. Plashet now looks sweetly, and your little room almost tempts me to take it as a sitting room for myself, it is so pretty and snug, newly furnished, and looking very pleasant indeed. The poor and the school, I think, will be glad to have you at home, for help is wanted in these things. Indeed, if your hearts are but turned the right way, you may, I believe, be made the instruments of much good, and I shall be glad to have the day come when I may introduce you into prisons and hospitals. 'Therefore gird up the loins of your mind and be sober.' It appears to me to be your present business to give all diligence to your studies, and then I cannot help hoping that the day will come when you will be brought into much usefulness, and I also hope that what follows the text I quote will be your blessed experience. Read 1 Peter i. from verse 13."

Joseph John Gurney had now completed his course of studies and—John being established

at Lynn, and Samuel in London—had returned to take his place in the family Bank at Norwich, while living at Earlham with his sisters. In every spare hour at home he continued to study furiously, adding to a knowledge of the Old and New Testament in Hebrew and Greek that of Jewish history and antiquities, the Syriac version of the New Testament, the Chaldee Targums, the writings of Philo and Maimonides, as well as those of Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Irenæus, Tertullian, Eusebius, and Athanasius, together with the Commentaries of Chrysostom and Theophylact. On December 1, 1809, he writes :—

“We are going on remarkably comfortably. Catherine, Rachel, Richenda, Priscilla, and I, form a most harmonious party, and are entirely united in all our cares, pleasures, and pursuits. I am sure that our loss has had a powerful effect in bringing us more closely together.”

CATHERINE GURNEY to HANNAH BUXTON  
and LOUISA HOARE.

“*Earlham, Jan. 7, 1811.*—I hardly ever felt so occupied after my own heart as I am now, at least not since you were all grown up. My circumstances seem exactly suited to me, and I am so much interested in them all. How thankful I ought to be for my present blessings, temporal and spiritual, and how diligent in



endeavouring to turn them to account. Dear Dan is here in a very amiable, sweet mind, and busy studying most of the day: Joseph almost burthened with business. We rather long to have Chenda at home, but she is going on so happily at Lynn, we do not like to persuade her to come."

The self-introspection which had been inculcated upon her brothers and sisters by Catherine Gurney had now, to an unnatural and unwholesome extent, become the ruling habit of Joseph John's life. Once a quarter, in what he called his "quarterly review," he indulged in a grand self-examination and self-condemnation or acquittal; but every night, in his "*quaestiones nocturnae*," he examined the action and spirit of each day.

As Miss Thackeray says, "a kind of mutual priesthood" existed in the Gurney family for helping and sympathising. Thus in his religious course Joseph John was greatly helped by his uncle, Joseph Gurney, his father's younger brother, a minister in the Society of Friends, and with this uncle he was in the habit of dining every week, and talking openly of the things nearest his heart.

Under the influence of his uncle, and his sisters Elizabeth and Priscilla, Joseph John became every day increasingly in bondage

to the principles of the Society of Friends. "It will be difficult to the outward man to become more of a Friend," he wrote, "but it is the path of the cross, and of those who had the Father's name written on their foreheads, St. John heard a voice from heaven saying, 'These are they which follow the Lamb *whithersoever* He leadeth them.'" On July 14, 1811, he wrote:—

"I think that Friends have reason on their side with respect to the ministry; because I can hardly conceive any other authority for the ministry than the direct gift of the Holy Spirit. . . . Their testimonies about oaths and war put them, I think, upon a very high ground, and their ecclesiastical discipline is very admirable. I also think there is some reason in their minor testimonies about plainness of speech and dress. Indeed, I have felt so much about the former, that I have adopted their modes in some degree. . . . If it be the Lord's pleasure that I should adopt these things, may I be enabled to do so with all Christian boldness. Let me not be afraid of approaching my Saviour in solemn waiting to know His will."

Whilst, however, Joseph John Gurney was being drawn into a narrower outward path in connection with the Society of Friends, his inner sympathies with *all* Christian work seemed constantly enlarged. One of his interests at this time was the establishment of

an Auxiliary Bible Society at Norwich. For the meetings of this Society the large dining-room at Earlham Hall was annually given up from this time till 1836. It was on the occasion of its inaugural meeting (October 19, 1811) that Joseph John made his first public speech ; then also his sister, Mrs. Fry, who had come down from London, startled those around her by solemnly kneeling and calling aloud for the Divine blessing on the work, thus publicly showing that she had become a minister in her Society. She speaks of this as "awful to her nature, terrible to her as a timid and delicate woman," yet she received it with thankfulness, inasmuch as she considered it a token of being owned by Christ and employed in His service. Joseph John Gurney wrote afterwards :—

"*Norwich, Sept. 1811.*—Nothing could be better contrived than our Bible Society meeting. Understanding that considerable numbers would attend, we were obliged to transfer ourselves to St. Andrew's Hall. Everything was prepared, scaffolding for the orators and seats for the company, which was most respectable, unexpectedly clerical, and mustered about six hundred in number. The Mayor looked magnificent, with his gold chain, in the chair. The Bishop first harangued, and admirably well, upon the excellence of the British and Foreign Bible Society, its objects,

constitution, and effects. He then introduced the secretaries. Steinkopf, a most interesting German and Lutheran, and, as far as I can judge from an acquaintance of three days, a remarkably simple and devoted character, first came forward. He told the tale of what the Society had done in Germany and other parts of Europe, in broken but good English, and by degrees he warmed the meeting into enthusiasm. He was followed by Hughes, the Baptist secretary, an eloquent, solid, and convincing orator. The company was now ready for the resolutions. The Bishop proposed them, I seconded them; and after I had given a little of their history and purport, they were carried with acclamation. This was a great relief, as we trembled at the idea of discussion. The Bishop was thanked for his liberality. It was really delightful to hear an old Puritan and a modern Bishop saying everything that was kind and Christian-like of each other. The Bishop's heart seemed quite full, and primitive Kinghorn, when the Bishop spoke of him so warmly, seemed ready to sink into the earth with surprise and terrified modesty. Owen closed the meeting with an unnecessarily splendid, but most effectual address. More than £700 was collected before the company left the hall.

"We had a vast party at Earlham, and a remarkable day, a perfectly harmonious mixture of High Church, Low Church, Lutheran, Baptist, Quaker! It was a time which seemed to pull down all barriers of distinction, and to melt us all into one common Christianity. Such a beginning warrants us to expect much."

JOHN TULWIN SHERWELL of Ipswich *to a FRIEND*.

"Oct. 13, 1811.—The opening of the Auxiliary Bible Society at Norwich has been delightful. . . . At five we adjourned to Earlham Hall to dinner, where we sat down thirty-four in number—a mixture of different sects and persuasions. Words fail to express the delightful harmony of our feelings. Soon after the cloth was removed, our dear friend Elizabeth Fry knelt down, and in a most sweet and impressive manner implored the Divine blessing upon the company present, and for the general promotion of truth upon earth. On her rising, the secretary, Joseph Hughes (a Dissenting minister), observed in a solemn manner, 'Now of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but that in every age and nation those who fear Him and work righteousness are accepted of Him,' and the conversation becoming general, flowed on in a strain which assuredly had less in it of earth than of heaven. . . . Amongst those present was Priscilla Gurney, who is nearest to Hannah More's 'Lucilla' of any one I ever saw in person and manners, benevolence and piety."

The Rev. Joseph Hughes, secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, also writes in this year to a friend :—

"After the meeting at Norwich, we adjourned to Earlham, where we had passed the preceding day, and where we witnessed emanations of piety, generosity, and affection in a degree which does not often meet the eye of mortal. Our host and hostess were

Quakers, but, with the most cordial concurrence of the family, a clergyman read a portion of the Scriptures morning and evening, and twice we had prayers—I should have said thrice, for after dinner on the day of the meeting, the pause encouraged by the Society of Friends was succeeded by a devout address from a female minister, Elizabeth Fry, whose manner was so impressive and whose words were so appropriate that none present can ever forget them. The first emotion was surprise: the second, awe: and the third, pious fervour. . . . We seemed generally to feel like the disciples whose hearts burned within them as they walked to Emmaus."

It was not long after the Bible meetings at Norwich were begun that Joseph John formally united himself to the strictest sect of the Society of Friends, though to a young man, handsome, lively, and sought after, their rules must have seemed to present peculiar embarrassments, if not terrors.

"I was engaged long beforehand to a dinner-party. For three weeks beforehand I was in agitation from the knowledge that I must then enter the drawing-room with my hat on. From this sacrifice, strange and unaccountable as it may appear, I could not escape. In a Friend's attire, and with my hat on, I entered the drawing-room at the dreaded moment, shook hands with the mistress of the house, went back into the hall, deposited my hat, and returned home in some degree of peace. I had afterwards the

same thing to do at the Bishop's; the result was that I found myself a decided Quaker, was perfectly understood to have assumed that character, and to dinner-parties, except in the family circle, was asked no more."

The Gurneys of Earlham at this time drove out with four black horses, which used to be lent to Bishop Bathurst, as more pompous, when he required horses for state occasions, the episcopal roan horses then taking the Quaker family to Meeting.

PRISCILLA GURNEY to HANNAH, MRS. BUXTON.

"*January 6, 1810.*—It has given me pain to leave dear Earlham, though only for a short time. There is a serenity and peacefulness there which I think is not to be met with anywhere else. Whatever our circumstances may be, there is something there that makes us happy."

PRISCILLA to SAMUEL GURNEY.

"*Earlham, (Aug.) 1810.*—I have lately been inclined to feel encouraged about all our family, married and single, believing that we have but one great object in view, though our outward profession may be in some things a little different. I do earnestly desire that leading a religious life may become more and more the chief object with every one of us: that all things may be subservient to it, and may we, in this great attainment, be truly a help and a stimulus to one another, allowing no little outward differences

even in the least to separate us! . . . We three and Joseph are going on most comfortably and cheerfully."

"*Earlham*, 1811.—I hope we shall always hold it in view to help one another as much as we can on our way, but I am more and more convinced that the best way of helping those dearest to us is by looking home to ourselves, by diligently and perseveringly watching over our own conduct, that we may encourage by example rather than precept."

With the same feeling as Priscilla's we find Hannah Buxton writing in her journal :—

"*Earlham*, *Sept.* 30, 1811.—I wish to remember the last day or two. All eleven of us, brothers and sisters, have spent them together. I esteem it a great mercy that we should have been allowed once more to meet, and I earnestly desire that it may stimulate each individual so to live, that we may together inherit the promises, and be one in Christ, in whom our union with each other may be perfected. There does indeed subsist the utmost outward harmony. We had a very delightful hour yesterday evening, John reading to his thirteen brothers and sisters an excellent sermon of Cecil's upon 'Patience,' and also in the Bible, 2 Cor. iv. 5: it came with peculiar force, circumstanced as we were, just met, and just going to part. I believe every heart was called forth to the Giver of all our comforts, the Author of all our pleasures; and this was delightfully expressed by Betsy, who knelt down at the conclusion of our reading, and prayed that the mercies which had so abundantly over-



shadowed us might be continued to us and our children's children."

In this year the Buxtons had been much attracted and touched by the sermons of Josiah Pratt, minister in Wheeler Street Chapel, Spitalfields, to whose preaching Fowell Buxton attributed his first real acquaintance with the doctrines of Christianity. Thirty years after he said, in writing to Mr. Pratt, "Whatever I have done in my life for Africa, the seeds of it were sown in Wheeler Street Chapel." Soon after the strong religious impression thus created, Fowell Buxton had a very severe illness, of which he wrote to a friend, "No one action of my life presented itself then as any sort of consolation. 'I know that my Redeemer liveth' was the sentiment uppermost in my mind."

In this summer Richard Gurney of Keswick—"Uncle Gurney"—died. After his funeral Catherine Gurney writes to Louisa, Mrs. Hoare:—

"*Earlham, July 24, 1811.*—We passed through yesterday more comfortably than might have been expected; indeed, the whole of it was very solemn and affecting, without being painfully oversetting. Nothing passed at Meeting calculated to give pain, further than what must necessarily be experienced on such mourn-

ful occasions. Dear Betsy's company has been most acceptable to all; she did not speak at the Meeting or grave, but in our own solemn sitting in the drawing-room at Keswick she prayed most sweetly, and, I should trust, to the consolation and edification of all present. There were very few there except the very nearest relations, and her prayer was either in thanksgiving for the mercies that have been vouchsafed to us as a family, with a fervent petition for their continuance, especially for the increase of spiritual blessings, or an expression of humble confidence in the blessedness of the departed. Not another word was said at Keswick, nor could any one desire an addition, for this seemed to contain all that could be most wished for.

"When we arrived at the graveyard, numbers were already assembled. Ann Burgess only knelt down in prayer, quite in a general way, and we stood there but a short time. At the Meeting, Henry Hull stood a long time exhorting all (and the Meeting was crowded with people) to profit by the solemn occasion for which we were met together, and to examine our most important accounts and how they stood, and how far we were prepared to meet our Judge. I thought there was much life and power in his preaching, though it was full of repetition. Two of the women Friends spoke, and I think Henry Hull finished the Meeting by prayer. Considering *who* were the relations most concerned, the crowd of people that were gathered together, and the number of ministering Friends assembled, it was got through with admiration, and, I trust, with profit. If such occasions do not benefit us and leave a fresh stimulus in our minds, what can ?

“My dear aunt was an example of meekness, fortitude, and resignation the whole day; she was up in the morning giving all the orders; perfectly tranquil through the whole meeting; and dined at the head of the table with the greatest composure afterwards. Gatty Hanbury and dear Anna only sat with us before Meeting; they did not go there. John has been most attentive to my aunt and all of them. Joseph and Betsy were obliged to go away in the afternoon, which we were sorry for, but their coming has been most satisfactory; we were thankful also to have dear Sam, though for so short a time.”

It was in the same year of 1811 that Priscilla Gurney became a decided “Friend”—a “plain Quaker” both in language and dress, and in 1813 she became a minister, and from that time she constantly preached.<sup>1</sup> Her selection

<sup>1</sup> The famous John Locke (with King William III. incognito) attended a Meeting of Friends in London, and heard one Rebecca Collins speak with such power, that it removed his objections to a female ministry. He sent her some sweetmeats afterwards and wrote:—

“*Gray's Inn, Nov. 21, 1696.*—My sweet Friend, a paper of sweetmeats by the bearer to attend your journey comes to testify the sweetness I found in your Society. I admire no converse like that of Christian freedom, and fear no bondage like that of pride and prejudice. I now see acquaintance by sight cannot reach the height of enjoyment which acquaintance by knowledge arrives unto. Outward hearing may misguide, but internal knowledge cannot err. We have something here of what we shall have hereafter, to ‘know as we are known.’ This we, with other friends, were at the first view partakers of, and the more there is of this in this life, the less we need inquire of what nation, party, or persuasion our friends are, for our own knowledge is more sure to us than another. Thus we know when we have believed. Now, the God of all grace grant that you may hold fast that rare grace

of hymns, now known as "Gurney's Hymns," have had a wide circulation, especially in Quaker circles.

Her brother-in-law, Fowell Buxton, after describing the loveliness of her person and manner, says :—

"No less remarkable were the powers of her mind. I have seldom known a person of such sterling ability ; and it is impossible to mention these mental powers without adverting to that great, and, in my estimation, that astounding display of them which was afforded by her ministry. I have listened to many eminent preachers and many speakers also, but I deem her as perfect a speaker as I ever heard. The tone of her voice, her beauty, the singular clearness of her conceptions, and above all her own strong conviction that she was urging the truth, and truth of the utmost importance—the whole constituted a species of ministry which no one could hear, and which I am persuaded no one ever *did* hear, without a deep impression."

Mrs. Opie addressed to Priscilla Gurney the lines :—

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of charity, and choose that unbiassed and unbounded love, which, if it decay not, will spring up mightily, as the waters of the sanctuary, higher and higher, until you, with the Universal Church, swim together in the ocean of Divine love. Woman, indeed, had the honour first to publish the resurrection of the Lord of Love—why not again the resurrection of the Spirit of Love? And let all the disciples of Christ rejoice therein, as doth your partner,

JOHN LOCKE."

“Go, child of charity, pursue thy course,  
Like a lone sunbeam traversing the waste :  
To want’s pale victims go, a sure resource,  
And let the sufferer pity’s luxury taste.

To thee what boots it that across the plain  
Sweeps the chill wind with desolating sway ?  
To thee what boots it that the wintry rain  
Beats on thy bosom thro’ the dreary way ?

Within that bosom glows such holy zeal,  
Nor winds nor storms can check thy firm career ;  
Thou goest, sweet soother, every wound to heal,  
Hereafter’s terrors and each sorrow here.

For while thy hands the needed food impart  
To the faint husband and the suffering wife,  
Lo ! thy pure lips, that speak thy pious heart,  
Will also offer them the Bread of Life.”

In November Mrs. Fry was at Earlham, when Priscilla was to be received as a minister. After her return she wrote :—

“*Plashtet, Nov. 11, 1811.*—I had felt great weight respecting the Norwich Monthly Meeting, not knowing what I might be expected to do there. But I felt quite relieved of going, as I expected, into the Men’s Meeting, for they came into the Women’s Meeting on account of dear Priscilla being acknowledged a minister, which gave me an opportunity of fully relieving my mind towards men and women,<sup>1</sup> and also we had a sweetly

<sup>1</sup> The very quaint mode in which the Society of Friends speak of their own ministering is best understood by reference to one of their leading doctrines—that the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit is needful in a true Christian ministry, and that such exercises as prayer and preaching are not at the command of man.

favoured time as concerned Priscilla, for which my soul was thankful.

“Dear Priscilla, before we parted, prayed for my safe and peaceful return home, which prayer has been remarkably granted.”

Priscilla and Joseph John Gurney now took a prominent part in, if they did not from this time originate, the movement to improve the scriptural instruction in the Friends' schools, which some old-fashioned stiff Quakers did not like. It in no way affected the indescribable harmony which united the family that just as Priscilla was being drawn into the strictest bonds of Quakerism, her sister Hannah received baptism in the English Church. She had written to her sister Rachel Gurney :—

“*Hampstead, July 11, 1812.*—It is sweet indeed to live in love, and I write truly in the desire that this love may be strengthened and confirmed among us, and that each individually may so do their part, that there may be progress in the whole united body. I do wish to obtain a spirit of true charity and forbearance towards each in the various paths in which we walk, and not to limit the proceeding of any one to my own standard. Well do I know how much I need a portion of this enlarged spirit, especially as I require it in my turn, of others.

“I have felt it best of late to be much more decided in my own path, and have found help and strength

from it. I have believed it right for me to give up attending Meeting at present. The time seemed come to make a full trial of attending church, and to examine the effect of it on my mind. Also I believed that it was most for my good to continue without a break to hear Mr. Pratt till I go into Norfolk. It appears to me that I am drawing more and more towards a union with the Church. I do not feel that it is in my own hands, but it is my daily prayer that He who knows what is right for me will lead me to a conclusion, and will bless it to me, whatever it may be."

And a little later, to her sister Catherine, herself already a member of the Church of England, she wrote :—

"I should be very glad to consult thee on my proceedings with regard to the Church. I have of late felt *bound* to submit to baptism, as the means offered me of making an avowed declaration of my earnest desire to be a servant of Christ, and through His grace to endeavour to renounce and oppose all sin unto my life's end; and I believe that in His hands it would be a means of confirming my faith and strengthening my reliance upon Him. It has been a subject of serious meditation and consideration. What I have most acted upon was the simple recommendation of our Saviour, and the plain practice of the Apostles in regard to baptism. This has of late had great weight in my mind. I have felt it a comfort that such an ordinance was instituted as a seal to this spiritual work. Unless the work was begun in my

heart, which I think it is, I could not enter into this ordinance ; but I think it right for me to take advantage of it as a seal to a covenant with Him, and in it to avow my intention and desire to serve God."

In the same year Richenda Gurney had written to Elizabeth Fry :—

"*April* 4, 1812.—I have thought of thee often, dearest Betsy, and with much interest, since we parted ; yet not a word have I heard of thee since thee left Dereham. I hope by this time thee are comfortably established again at home, and are enjoying thyself with thy dear husband and children. It will give me much comfort to hear that thee are now well in health. But more than all this, I hope thee are permitted to enjoy that peace of mind which is often graciously given to us here as the sweet reward of faithful labours, and such I believe thine to have been, to the comfort, and benefit, and encouragement of many. It should indeed excite us to gratitude that thee should thus be made an instrument of good to others, and should be thus called to stand forth conspicuously amongst the labourers in our great Master's vineyard. I can with sincerity acknowledge that the desire of my heart is, that thee and others may be abundantly blessed in this thy high calling. It was to me a comfort, and a pleasure, and a privilege to be with thee ; I felt near to thee in heart, and bound to thee far more closely than ever in Christian fellowship. I felt no desire to talk upon religious subjects, or to bring forward any of the grounds upon which we may





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Elizabeth M. Fry  
after G. Richmond



in some measure differ, but rather to act and *feel with thee*, and, as far as I was enabled, to unite with thee in thy religious and spiritual exercises. Though not a *Friend* in the general sense of the word in respect of the Society, what a privilege and comfort it is to me that I do not feel any wall of separation between us, but that I am permitted to taste something of the 'unity of the spirit and of the bond of peace' with thee.

"I long for thee to know my religious course outwardly, as well as I know thine. My circumstances and feelings are, to be sure, very peculiar. I am brought so *near* two rather opposite modes or systems of religion (I hardly know what to call it), the privileges of which seem in some measure both open to me: the good and the defects of each, from being thus intimately acquainted with both, I am perhaps rather unusually sensible of. In as far as I have been blessed with a love for what is good and an interest in the cause of religion, I can rejoice to see *that* flourish, let it be where, and how, and under what form it may; and from understanding the language and mode of different sects of Christians, I can see and understand the good in them, whereas, without this acquaintance, it might be difficult, and I think is difficult, to perceive their motive and principle of action, which will differ a little even amongst very sincere Christians. I have thus learnt to understand and value what is good among Friends, and this is the cause of my attachment to them. I love them as a religious and sober body, standing up, as so many of them faithfully do, for the cause of religion and morality. Their moderation is truly becoming to the spirit of Christianity;

their general strictness of conduct, and especially with respect to speech, I so approve that I hope in these points to be more and more a Friend as long as I live. Their reverence for religion and quietness and peace are very admirable, and very valuable to me, as tending to habituate the mind to reflection and serious thought, and to beget habits of composure and quietness. In these and many other points, I can in some measure unite, and would wish to unite more closely with Friends ; so I should think any Christian of any denomination might ; and for the encouragement and example of these virtues I value my privilege of still belonging to the Society, as far as I do. On the other hand, I believe it has been of the greatest importance and benefit to me to have become intimately acquainted with other religious characters, especially in the Church. I have found there a knowledge and an *expansion* of the truths of religion, a power in bringing forward the important articles of our faith, and an enlarged view of the whole Christian dispensation, setting forth the doctrine of the Atonement as the grand foundation of Christian faith and practice. Though I increasingly believe the same truths are acknowledged by Friends, yet I cannot deny that there is to my mind a far greater fulness and satisfaction in the way in which they are brought forward and built upon, in the first place in the Articles of Belief and Liturgy of the Church, and then by many of its present ministers in their preaching. I feel the value and importance of this so very much, so increasingly, that I can hardly keep my mouth shut with respect to them. And I believe, my dear Betsy, that thee would much rather that I should freely speak my

mind than keep anything back. I feel sure that many Friends, who have been entirely excluded from this means of instruction, can have no idea of the power and importance, and enlargement and spirituality of the mode of preaching in the Church. So sensible am I of its value, that I could not help feeling as I came out of church yesterday morning, 'Oh, that Betsy could have been with us!'—the important event of the resurrection of our Lord, and the consequences of it to us, had been so impressively enlarged upon and so feelingly brought home to the hearts of those present. I have felt it a very important privilege in the Church (though I know it is rather objected to by Friends) that there are appointed seasons for bringing forward these momentous articles of our belief. Is not this one proof amongst many that when our minds have been differently trained, it is hard for us to conceive how we derive benefit from opposite administrations?

"I have mentioned some of the benefits which the Church offers, but that of the Sacraments I feel is yet more important. With the view and feeling on the subject which I have now, I believe I should not have been justified in acting otherwise than I have done. I never, that I am sensible of, have experienced a feeling of misgiving with respect to this subject; it has uniformly appeared to be my duty. So in faith and simple obedience I have wished to follow the dictates of my conscience, and hitherto I may acknowledge, and I hope without presumption, that my having taken this step has been blessed to me. Every time I approach the Table of my Lord, I wish to do it in humble obedience to what has appeared to my mind a

command. I have not expected great things, or to have my feelings worked upon, but I have desired to partake of this heavenly feast in faith, humbly seeking (though the action alone could not sanctify) that the spirit of dependence in which I have desired that it may be done might make it acceptable and bring with it a blessing. And I trust it has been so, as I think I feel an increasing comfort and strength from this ordinance. Though satisfied with respect to others *when it is rejected from conscientious motives*, and though I believe that God, who seeth the heart, will be well satisfied with the *spiritual* communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, I regard the outward participation of it as an *appointed means*, which, if made use of in the right spirit and frame of mind, will bring the Divine blessing. Thus Naaman was appointed to make use of *means* to obtain the Divine blessing; it was not that the waters of Jordan had an intrinsic power to heal, or that God was not able Himself to heal in a moment without any such instrumentality, but a faithful obedience to God's commands in the use of this simple means restored him to health.

"I hope, my dearest Betsy, it will not be uncomfortable to thee that I should thus enlarge on these subjects. I have done it chiefly for my own satisfaction, and it seems to me more *honest* to tell thee a little how I am going on in these respects. As I am still able in many ways to unite with thee and other Friends so very nearly, it seems more desirable thee should know how I stand, and how it is I love thee so much, and I may say look up with so much reverence to thee, while I do not remain entirely amongst you. The

same great interest in the Society which makes me rejoice in its excellence, and feel desirous for its spiritual prosperity, also makes me feel its defects and long to have them remedied. It seems to me that one of its great temptations *in religious matters* is to separate its members from all other Christians, wholly cutting them off from ever attending other places of worship, causing them to have little communion with others on these subjects, and not to be in the habit of reading much, except in their own particular line, till their ground becomes a little narrowed, and I do not think many of them have an idea of the privileges enjoyed by other Christians. I mention this now, as thy circumstances in this respect are, as those of most in the family, rather peculiar, and it seems to me, in consequence, that thee may be a particular blessing to the Society. I therefore cannot help encouraging thee, for the advantage of both parties, to continue to cultivate free intercourse and intimacy with those who differ from thee. I can assure thee how much satisfaction and comfort it gives me to find thy heart so open to all; thy desires so lively for their advancement in their different ways, and thyself so disposed meekly to learn from others. This is the spirit of charity and Christian fellowship that we should all endeavour more and more to cultivate, and I must think thee sets us a sweet example in it.

“Before I conclude, there is one little thing I should feel more satisfied to mention; this is with respect to the days that are solemn occasions with us, but are not felt by Friends. Though they may be days set apart by man only, yet they are to commemorate events

of such serious importance, and are felt so much by the general body of Christians, that it gives me pain to have them violated, and to hear the remarks which are made in consequence. I have felt this especially since these days have been of some consequence to myself. Though we cannot entirely unite in what we feel sacred, yet we cannot be too careful in showing respect to one another in these things. If Friends were rather more scrupulous on this head, though attended perhaps by some inconvenience, I cannot but think that it would be a great improvement. Farewell, my dearest Betsy, with renewed affection,

“RICHENDA GURNEY.”

In 1812 the rash speculations of William Fry—Joseph Fry’s younger brother—had brought the family in St. Mildred’s Court to the verge of that bankruptcy which fell upon it later. The catastrophe was for the time warded off by the intervention and more than generous help of Elizabeth Fry’s two brothers, Samuel and Joseph John Gurney, but the utmost temporary economy became necessary; the London household was broken up for the time, and the Fry children—delighted to escape into the country—were sent to make a long stay with their willing aunts in Norfolk.

Katherine Fry,<sup>1</sup> writing long afterwards, says :—

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Fry’s eldest daughter—always unmarried.



"I will endeavour to recall Earlham as I remember it during our long visit there in 1813. Our aunts Catherine and Rachel wore no caps, but a head-dress of crape folded turban-wise. Both were brown in the morning, in the afternoons Aunt Catherine's were dark red, Aunt Rachel's, white. Aunt Rachel also frequently wore white muslin dresses. They had few or no ornaments. Aunt Catherine always wore dark or black silk, but often with a red shawl. Aunt Priscilla, as a Friend, was dressed in a dark silk or poplin gown, exquisitely neat, finished and refined: finish and refinement characterised all she did—drawing, needle-work, or whatever it was.

"The dinner was at four or five, for which every one dressed. We, with our governess, were admitted to the table. After dinner, employments were in a degree resumed—drawing, work, or reading aloud. We had our drawing lessons in 'the eleven-sided attic,' with Aunt Priscilla or old Crome, or sketched with the latter in the park. In the evenings we walked with our governess, and Mrs. Freeman, beyond the limits of the park, often to the Scarnells' farm, to Lower Earlham, or to a ruined chapel called Beauthorp, from which the bell is said to have been removed at the suppression to Earlham Hall, and to be the same whose pleasant tones so often recalled us from our rambles.

"Tea was a substantial meal, the table spread with white and brown bread, varieties of cake and biscuits, with Mrs. Freeman making tea. In those summer evenings it generally took place in the dining-room, then still called by its old name of 'the great

parlour.' How pleasant it was, with the windows open, and the setting sun gleaming across the study lawn: then the noble lawn itself, how everybody used to walk upon it, or sit in groups under the surrounding trees. The life at Earlham was a very out-of-door life in those days.

"On Sundays we went to Norwich Meeting, and between the morning and evening Meetings used to accompany our Aunt Priscilla to an adult Sunday-school she had established for the poor. We used to dine in the school-room, before the scholars arrived, on the cold contents of a basket brought from Earlham in the morning.

"At that time Dr. Valpy, a relation of the famous Dr. Valpy of Reading, was master of the Grammar School at Norwich. Being a good scholar, he had brought it into reputation for gentlemen's sons. Robert Hankinson, afterwards Archdeacon of Norfolk, young Edward Edwards, and the sons of others of our aunts' friends, were then there, and always spent from Saturday till Monday at Earlham. Aunt Catherine laboured for their improvement by reading theology with them in her room, from the windows of which they too often watched the parties on the lawn. These lads, not much older than ourselves, were our great friends, and (as far as I can remember) our only young associates. From them we caught the whooping-cough, and, I believe, also through them we acquired a more easy style of language than that usual amongst strict Friends, at which, at that time, we began to laugh. A poor slight sketch this is, but it is sixty years ago, and when I was a child, I understood as a child."

It was in 1813 that Mrs. Fry's attention was first called by William Forster to the condition of the female prisoners in Newgate.

"At that time all the female prisoners in Newgate were confined in that part afterwards known as the untried side. The larger portion of the quadrangle was then used as a state prison. The partition wall was not of a sufficient height to prevent the state prisoners from overlooking the narrow yard and the windows of the two wards and two cells of which the women's division consisted. These four rooms comprised about one hundred and ninety superficial yards, into which, at this time, nearly three hundred women with their numerous children were crowded,—tried and untried, misdemeanants and felons, without classification, without employment, and with no other superintendence than that given by a man and his son, who had charge of them by night and by day. In the same rooms, in rags and dirt, destitute of sufficient clothing, sleeping without bedding on the floor, the boards of which were in part raised to supply a sort of pillow, they lived, cooked, and washed.

"With the proceeds of their clamorous begging when any stranger appeared amongst them, the prisoners purchased liquors from a regular tap in the prison; spirits were openly drunk, and the ears were assailed by terrible language. Beyond that necessary for their safe custody, there was little restraint over their communication with the world without."

Into this scene, accompanied by Anna Buxton,

Mrs. Fry first entered only as the bearer of some of the warm clothing of which she had heard the prisoners were greatly in need. The impression which the degradation of the women and children in Newgate then made upon her was never effaced, though for several years family cares pressed upon her too much to admit of the possibility of any outside work.

MRS. FRY to her SONS, *staying at Earlham* (1813).

"I cannot help longing to see you, my very dear little John and Willy, and give you each a kiss. I am so very fond of my little children, and often feel thankful I have so many; and if they grow better and better as they grow older, they will comfort and please their parents. I have lately been twice to Newgate prison to see after the poor prisoners, who had little infants almost without clothing. If you saw how small a piece of bread they are allowed every day, you would be very sorry, for they have nothing else to eat, unless their friends give them a trifle. I could not help thinking when in the prison, what sorrow and trouble those have who do wrong; and they have not the comfort of feeling amidst all their trials that they have endeavoured to do their duty. Good people are, no doubt, often much tried, but they have so much to comfort them when they remember that the Almighty is their Friend, and will care for them. We may also hope that if the poor wicked people are really sorry for their faults, God will pardon them, for His mercy

is very great. If you were to grow up, I should like you to go to visit the poor sad people, to try to comfort them and do them good. I hope you will endeavour to be very useful, and not spend all your time in pleasing yourselves, but try to serve others and prefer them before yourselves. How very much I love you. Let me have letters written by yourselves. Farewell, my darling children. Remember the way to be happy is to do good.—Your tender mother, E. F.”

The Rev. C. B. Tayler writes :—

“ Four gentlemen, prompted by a spirit of Christian benevolence, had visited the great London prison. One of them, the well-known and benevolent William Forster, described to Mrs. Fry the state of the wretched and abandoned women he had seen there. She felt deeply the shame and misery of so many of her own sex herded together. What was to be done, she knew not. But she felt that the first thing was to see with her own eyes the degraded condition of the guilty and wretched women. She found that the more violent and depraved were not contented to beg from strangers, but scrupled not to thrust their hands through the bars, and to clutch at anything they could snatch from their persons. Mr. Newman, the governor, entered that portion of the prison with reluctance, for, half-frenzied by the spirits which were openly drunk there, many of the depraved women took a pleasure in yelling, screaming, and using the most vile, filthy, and terrible language. The governor advised Mrs. Fry and her companion, though without avail, to leave

their watches in his house, lest they should be snatched from their sides, before he conducted them to that part of the prison. After her first visit Mrs. Fry left Newgate deeply shocked and depressed by all that she had witnessed, her heart filled with the deepest pity for the unhappy women and their young and helpless children."

Mrs. Fry's diary says :—

"*Feb.* 16, 1813.—Yesterday we were some hours at Newgate with the poor female felons, attending to their outward necessities; we had been twice before. Before we went away, dear Anna Buxton had a few words in supplication, and, very unexpectedly to myself, I had also. I heard weeping, and I thought they appeared much tendered. A very solemn quiet was observed. It was a striking scene, the poor people on their knees around us, and in their deplorable condition."

At this time, however, with her numerous and increasing family of children, it was impossible that Mrs. Fry could devote herself to other duties than those of her own home. She sent frequent gifts of clothes to the poor women in Newgate, but she could do no more.

"She quietly devoted herself during the next few years to her young children. She delighted to watch over them by night as well as by day. She herself

attended to their least ailments, and was always in a state of distress when she saw them suffer. She had the gentlest touch with little children. She would win their hearts, if they had never won hers before, almost at the first glance, and by the first sound of her sweet voice. As the mistress of a household, she loved a simple liberality and an unostentatious comfort. Her element was hospitality; and whilst Christian moderation was observed, her taste was gratified by an open, generous mode of living. She was always most correct in account-keeping. The distinct heads of house, garden, farm, charity, with many others, marked the painstaking care with which she performed her self-imposed task. In her treatment of her servants, if she erred, it was upon the side of indulgence; she was willing to make allowances, and was careful not to provoke their tempers nor hurt their feelings, yet 'a firm hand with a household' was among the maxims she impressed upon her daughters as they advanced in life. 'She opened her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue was the law of kindness' towards all with whom she was associated. God had given her largeness of heart; and, while she was strictly watchful over her own heart, and unsparing in her censure and severe in her judgment of herself, she was as watchful in her solicitude not to distress others, nor to blame and pass judgment upon them." <sup>1</sup>

Concerning the great variety of opinions now held at Earlham Mrs. Schimmelpennick says :—

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. C. B. Tayler, "Personal Recollections."

"It is remarkable that their differences of opinion in minor points never produced the slightest degree of disunion in the members of the Earlham family. They agreed perfectly on every fundamental doctrine, and uniformly enjoyed complete religious harmony."

Katherine Fry writes :—

"The family harmony was in no way disturbed by differences of opinion on religious points. For in one thing they all agreed—to love one another. When some very strict Friends visited Earlham, people with whose opinions and habits Catherine could have no sympathy, her behaviour towards them is thus described by Priscilla in a letter—'Nothing can exceed dear Catherine's kindness, and sweetness of mind towards them.'"

To many it was especially touching that when the commercial brother, the great City merchant, Samuel, visited Earlham, he, more than any other, showed humility and teachableness in holy things, meekly listening to and reverently accepting the "ministry" of his brother Joseph John and his younger sister Priscilla, even as, in his own home and through life, he had bent to the ministry of his sister Elizabeth Fry.

Many Quakers came forward about this time with eligible offers of marriage for Priscilla, but



she always remained firm in her refusal to leave her brother John, who greatly needed her supporting care. He had received some strain in lifting his dying wife, from which he walked lame ever after, and in 1813 his health and mental powers seemed alike to fail. He became a complete wreck. Priscilla spent the spring of 1814 with him at Clifton, where Rachel and Mr. Edwards joined them. In the summer they returned to Earlham, knowing that nothing could be done; and on the 8th of September, when he was only thirty-three, John Gurney died in the anteroom chamber, as his father had done five years before. On the last day of his life all his mental powers seemed restored. He said that morning, surrounded by his brothers and sisters, was the happiest he had ever spent, adding, "How delightful is our being together, and loving one another as we do." Mrs. Fry was present to pray by the deathbed "in near unity" with all her brothers and sisters. "Oh, may our children love as we love; this has been the prayer of my heart," she wrote as she left the family circle.

After attending John Gurney's funeral, and witnessing the happy spirit of thanksgiving which pervaded his family, Mrs. Opie wrote:—

“ Friend long beloved ! on thy untimely bier  
I came to drop the tributary tear,  
Of weeping relatives to join the train,  
And heave the bitter sigh which mourns in vain.  
But not the scene that boding fancy drew,  
On night’s deep gloom or morning’s orient hue,  
My eyes beheld when to thy darkened dome  
’Twas mine with restless, tearful haste to come ;  
No weeping relatives subdued by grief  
In sobs of anguish seemed to seek relief ;  
Nor wan despair nor woe-worn silence bowed  
O’er the last hour affection’s hand bestowed.  
A lovelier sight my hushed attention draws,  
Checks my deep sigh and into calmness awes :  
I see exalted human ills above,  
Firm faith triumphant over tortur’d love ;  
For while fond memory’s power the past restored,  
And other virtues showed the dear record,  
Showed thee well fitted for a nobler sphere,  
By suffering purified and hallowed here ;  
Then thy last hour’s instructive scenes recall’d,  
How pious hope each human fear enthrall’d,  
And bade before thy mourning kindred’s eyes  
Thy image brighter from probation rise.

Away mortality’s weak sorrow fled—  
They hailed thee living, not deplored thee dead,  
And, to thy Christian end alive alone,  
They made thy parting triumphs all their own,  
To glad thanksgiving changed repining voice,  
And learnt like thee in trials to rejoice.  
Who can forget beside thy simple bier  
The soothing sounds that charmed our listening ear,  
When thy loved sisters<sup>1</sup> poured on bended knee  
Their touching tribute to their God and thee,  
When faith made firm the tones which feeling shook,  
And sorrowing love devotion’s breastplate took.

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth and Priscilla,



*John Gurney*

*after W. P. W.*



When holy truths thy honoured uncle<sup>1</sup> taught,  
And thy rapt friend the sacred ardour caught,  
Till selfish sorrow could no longer stay,  
Borne on religion's soaring wing away.

Oh, may the truths that solemn hour imprest  
Still spring eternal in my conscious breast,  
Still urge my prayer thro' faith's uplifted eye,  
Like thee to live, that I like thee may die."

Mrs. Opie had travelled all night from London to be present at the funeral of John Gurney, and ever after she attended the Quaker services, though not finally received into membership till August 1825. Up to this time she had lived in full enjoyment of her wonderful natural charm. "Her countenance was animated, bright, and beaming; her eyes soft and expressive, yet full of ardour; her hair was abundant and beautiful, of auburn hue, and waving in long tresses; her figure was well formed, her carriage fine, her hands, arms, and feet well shaped; and all around and about her was the spirit of youth and joy and love."<sup>2</sup> After this we find Southey writing: "I like her in spite of her Quakerism—nay, perhaps the better for it. It must always be remembered

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Gurney of the Grove.

<sup>2</sup> See "Memorials of Amelia Opie," by Cecilia Lucy Brightwell, 1854. John Opie had died April 9, 1807, and was buried near Reynolds in St. Paul's.

amongst what persons she had lived, and that religion was never presented to her in a serious form until she saw it in *drab*."

One of the clerical friends who was now frequently at Earlham was Francis Cunningham, Rector of Pakefield near Lowestoft, and in 1815 he became engaged to Richenda Gurney.

HANNAH BUXTON to RICHENDA (*before her marriage*).

"*Brick Lane, Jan. 27, 1816.*—It would be particularly delightful to me to be with thee. I much wished to go through this interesting time with thee, dearest Chenda: such times are uniting and beneficial. It has come over me as the time approached, but my sweet baby has not been well, and so I have suffered Fowell to go without me.

"You may suppose how our hearts are engaged in you. Each individual excites my warmest sympathy. I do not doubt that thee will feel composed and comfortable, but at times thy mind and time will be almost too full. What a pause thee will come to at first, after thee gets to Pakefield. I hope thee will not too soon engage in much business; a few weeks' real quiet would have such a happy effect. How I do desire that a real blessing may attend thee, my dearest Chenda; that thee may experimentally feel the Lord a *present* help at this juncture. I remember feeling the comfort and pleasure of Christ's attendance at a wedding when I married; it gives a cheering encouragement to the whole day. I am glad to have Fowell with thee on Sunday; it will be an interesting day to all.

"Well, I here take my leave of thee, dear Chenda, as a single sister. I do believe that as a married one our hearts will be as nearly united. I do not feel that we could be separated, so thoroughly true and deeply grounded is the affection we have one for another.—  
Thy tenderly attached sister, H. BUXTON."

Francis Cunningham and Richenda Gurney were married at Earlham Church, the bride being given away by her cousin Hudson Gurney. Like her other married sisters, she never ceased to have a close and loving share in the family life at Earlham, but in her happy home at Pakefield, and afterwards at Lowestoft, she was the most spirited and devoted clergyman's wife, throwing all the energies of her ever-light figure and bright spirit into its duties with the same enthusiasm with which she continued to enjoy her drawing and other home employments.

Mrs. Opie sent her a "Thomas à Kempis," with a long copy of verses ending in the truly prophetic lines—

"As yet thy griefs have been but summer showers,  
Thy greatest ills but crumpled leaves of flowers ;  
Still, tho' thus blest thy former hours have been,  
Thy happiest days, I trust, thou hast not seen,  
But still more blest, as runs the sand of life,  
Than child or sister was, will be the wife."

A few years later, her brother-in-law, the

Rev. John Cunningham, writes of Richenda Cunningham to Fowell Buxton :—

“ I look at her with amazement—always kind, never foolishly indulgent ; always busy, and never in a hurry ; always clever, and never cunning ; always most sensitive in conscience, but never scrupulous. I thank you, dear Buxton, for first thoroughly opening my mind to excellences, for first fixing the nail which she has since driven.”

In August 1816, when Mrs. Fry was visiting her sister Richenda at Pakefield, she wrote :—

“ Our situation is very peculiar, surrounded as we are with those of various sentiments, and yet I humbly trust each seeking the right way. To have a clergyman for a brother-in-law is very different to having one for a friend, a much closer, and yet stronger call for preserving sweet unity of spirit, that we should meet him as far as we can, and offend as little as is possible by our scruples, and yet—for the sake of others as well as ourselves—faithfully maintain our ground, and keep very very close to Him who alone can direct safely.”

Meantime Rachel Gurney was living entirely with her young brother Daniel at Lynn. She, as well as her sister Priscilla, had now become a regular “ minister ” amongst Friends, and was often “ moved ” to “ bear testimony ” even in her family circle at Earlham, which was welcomed by her Church of England sisters,



Catherine and Richenda, as well as by her Quaker brother. In 1815 she accompanied Daniel on a six months' tour to Switzerland and Italy, though it was an effort to her penitential spirit to do anything so pleasant. From Rome she wrote :—

"*December 17, 1815.*—I have frequently closely examined myself with regard to the lawfulness of our present objects and enjoyments, and have been upon the whole encouraged to believe that, if our minds be preserved in the fear of God, the knowledge and experience to be gained may be blessed to us. On first looking to this journey, I endeavoured in some poor measure to seek to know the will of God with regard to my duties before I looked to the pleasure of it . . . but I feel no securities except that the will of God must be sought from day to day, and that we must truly *wait upon Him*. The English Church services are some degree of help and comfort to me in this desolate land."

In 1816 Daniel Gurney moved his residence to a small old-fashioned house at Runcton near Lynn, which, much added to and altered, still belongs to his descendants. Rachel wrote :—

"*Runcton, Nov. 3.*—We entered upon this new abode on October 31, with feelings of pleasure, and I trust with strong desire for the blessing of God to rest upon us. Before coming here we spent ten days at Earlham with our dearest brothers and sisters. Francis

and Chenda were there ten days; Fowell and Hannah, Sam and Louisa. Joseph was unusually shining. My heart has overflowed with thankfulness and true content in our family union: may the only sure element increase amongst us."



RUNCTON HALL, 1816.<sup>1</sup>

"*Earlham, August 25.*—I was much struck with Joseph's ministry yesterday. His prayer in the morning was powerful, and full of substantial Christian doctrine, and in the afternoon he quoted the Prophet Jonah—"What meanest thou, O sleeper?" and applied it to our carelessness of our eternal interests. His

<sup>1</sup> From a sketch by Richenda, Mrs. Cunningham.

strong views of the necessity of prayer, and habitual simple dependence upon God, come home as a reproof to myself.

"Yesterday Catherine went to Meeting with us. It was a time of true refreshment and religious solemnity. Dear Priscilla spoke, and in a most striking manner, on one day being with the Lord as a thousand years. Our dear uncle Joseph spoke also on living in the spirit of the cross of Christ and in subjection to the Lord."

In 1816 Priscilla was at Nice with her invalid cousin, Rachel Gurney of the Grove, who died there soon after the deaths of her two young brothers, which had been a great sorrow to the whole Gurney family. As she returned through France, Priscilla visited the colony of "Friends" at Congeries, and was able to address them in their own language. It was a pretty sight to see her, surrounded by young and old, all delighted with her, her own lively countenance, in the midst of the group, beaming with Christian affection and sweetness.

"Did such a mind beam through a homely face,  
Beauty was not required to lend a grace ;  
Did such a face veil an unworthy mind,  
Our partial eyes would be to error blind.  
Sweet minist'ring spirit, with delight we see  
Inward and outward graces joined in thee."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mary Leadbeater.

Meantime the attention of the whole family was frequently concentrated upon their young brother-in-law, Fowell Buxton, and his efforts for the emancipation of slaves. With these was mingled an anxiety to ameliorate the condition of prisoners in England, to which he had been drawn by his sister-in-law, Mrs. Fry, whose heart was more and more devoted to that work. With her he united in forming a society for the reformation of juvenile criminals. His speech on behalf of the distress amongst the Spitalfields weavers attracted universal attention.

T. FOWELL BUXTON *to his Wife* HANNAH.

"*Nov.* 29, 1816.—I am utterly astonished at the impression which my poor speech<sup>1</sup> has produced: all quarters send me congratulations.

"The committee voted that it was worth the £2000 already produced by it. One tells me it produced a kilderkin of tears, good measure: another, that he saw the whole bench of turtle-fed aldermen whimpering.

"In short, I am surprised at the general notice it has obtained, and cannot imagine why or wherefore I write to thee in this way, as it looks like vanity; yet as thee are part of myself . . . However, I may truly say that I do not feel at all elevated, and really, if others had seen it as I did, it would be generally considered as very inadequate to the occasion."

<sup>1</sup> On the distress in Spitalfields.

"*Hampstead, Jan. 5, 1817.*—I went to Newgate with Charles and Peter Bedford. I was in some degree interested by the boys, forty-four little wretches, some of them under sentence of death, though the certainty that none of them will be executed rather took off from the awfulness of their situation. I saw, however, four other poor creatures who are to be executed on Tuesday next. I did not speak to them—in fact, it was hardly possible, but the sight was enough.

"I felt no further inclination to examine the prison. It has made me long much that my life may not pass quite uselessly, but that, in some shape or other, I may assist in checking and diminishing crime and its consequent misery. Surely it is within the power of all to do something in the service of their Master; and surely I among the rest, if I were now to begin, and endeavour to the best of my capacity to serve Him, might be the means of good to some of my fellow-creatures.

"This capacity is, I feel, no mean talent and attended with no inconsiderable responsibility. I must pray, and thee, love, must pray for me, that I may at length stir myself up, and be enabled to feel somewhat of the real spirit of a missionary, and that I may devote myself, my influence, my time, and above all my affections, to the honour of God and the happiness of men.

"My mission is evidently not abroad, but it is not less a mission on that account. I feel that I may journey through life by two very different paths, and that the time is now come for choosing which I will pursue. I may go on as I have been going on, not

absolutely forgetful of futurity, nor absolutely devoted to it. I may get riches and repute, and gratify my ambition, and do some good and some evil, and at length I shall find all my time on earth expended, and, in retracing my life, I shall see little but capacities misapplied.

“The other is a path of more labour, and I may become a real soldier of Christ. I may feel I have no business on earth but to do His will and walk in His ways, and I may direct every energy I have to the service of others. Of these paths, I know which I would most gladly choose. Yet ‘what I would, that I do not, but what I hate, that do I.’”

In 1817 we find Joseph John Gurney writing in his journal:—

“I have paid a visit to Ackworth school in Yorkshire, the great seminary for the children of Friends not in opulent circumstances. I think it was there that I was enabled to institute the system of religious education, which has since worked so well there, and has spread to Sidcot, Croydon, and other schools under the care of the Society. I proposed to the General Meeting of Friends convened on the occasion, that every child in the school should be furnished with a Bible for his or her own use. The mind of the Meeting was in favour of my views. To the children I gave a proposition, in which they were invited, as volunteers, to study the Scriptures for themselves, and I entered into an engagement to return, if permitted, in a year’s time, to examine and reward them according to their pro-

ficiency. All the children received Bibles, which were well thumbed by the end of the year. They had taken them to bed with them, read them by the early morning light, and pored over them during leisure-time in the day, and especially on First days.

"I am persuaded that true religion, and therefore true Quakerism, will never flourish on the soil of ignorance. Yet instruction should be made rather a pleasure than a task. A taste for Scripture should be cultivated, and above all, the practical nature of the issue of true religion should ever be held up to view, and a reverent dependence on the influence of the Holy Spirit should be inculcated."

In April 1817, Joseph John Gurney, now, by the death of his brother, the master of Earlham, had gone to pay a long visit at Runcton to Daniel and Rachel, his secret object being that he might pay his addresses to his distant cousin, Jane Birkbeck, whose mother was one of the many daughters of Henry Gurney, and sister of the mother of Elizabeth Shepherd, Samuel Gurney's wife. Joseph John writes:—

"We had known each other from early childhood; our pursuits were similar, and she, like myself, had become a decided Friend from conviction. In some other respects our characters were different. Generous, steadfast, and lively, she had one of those hardier souls on which weakness is prone to lean, but her feelings were nevertheless warm and acute. She knew and

adored her Saviour, and remarkably walked by that rule, 'Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God and the Father by Him.'"

Joseph John Gurney and Jane Birkbeck were married, September 10, 1817, at the Friends' Meeting-house at Wells in Norfolk. Rachel Gurney wrote :—

"The Meeting on dearest Joseph's wedding-day was very solemn and sweet. The silence was first broken by the declaration of marriage, followed by a comment on it from Uncle Joseph, and then dear Priscilla spoke on 'What shall separate us from the love of Christ?' Betsy then prayed beautifully for them and for all, and Joseph concluded all by a prayer that they might be enabled to walk in the fear of the Lord; and under a most sweet impression of love and rejoicing the Meeting broke up."

Joseph John's journal says :—

"We lodged at a nice country inn about seven miles from Hunstanton, and arrived at Earlham to dinner on the following day. The sun shone sweetly upon us, and that dear place received us with open doors in all its brightest colours."

To Richenda Cunningham Elizabeth Fry wrote after the marriage :—

"*Plashet, Sept. 19, 1817.*—It is my anxious desire



we may all find Earlham the same sweet home it has ever been to us, although the mistress has changed; and that the same refreshment, comfort, and liberty of spirit that we have enjoyed there may be continued."

The change at Earlham was, however, really very great. Catherine had governed for twenty-five years rather as one occupying the presidential chair of a republic. Now all was altered. Jane Gurney was determined to rule, and would rule alone. Still she was generous and kind, and though they had no share in her government, her husband's three unmarried sisters were welcome guests in her home. Descended through her mother from Gurneys, she had herself an easy conformity with Friends, and especially with the Gurney family. But she was, though a Friend, also accustomed to much society in her own circle, and did not scruple to enjoy all the habits of luxurious affluence.

Nevertheless from this time the "Friendly" element became far more pronounced at Earlham than before, especially as, after his marriage, Joseph John Gurney became himself "a minister." The fact that the Bible Society was now one of his chief interests took him, soon after his marriage, to Paris, accompanied by his wife, his brother Samuel, the Buxtons, and the Cunninghams, that they might establish a

branch Bible Society in the French capital. Another object was to obtain information as to the systems of prison discipline adopted in the prisons of Antwerp and Ghent. It was on this occasion that, surrounded by a dense fog between Dover and Boulogne for two days and two nights, the boat in which the family were crossing drifted helplessly about in considerable danger, and very great discomfort for want of food : they are said to have given a guinea for a basin of groats—from which gruel had been made for an invalid on board—and that they were only warned of their dangerous proximity to the French coast by the braying of an ass on the cliffs. After his return, Joseph John writes to his sister-in-law Elizabeth at Ham House :—

*“Earlham, December 9, 1817.—We arrived late on Seventh day evening. A hearty welcome and a warm bright home awaited us. Dear Catherine and Priscilla were looking charmingly, and all the household in good order. What a blessing there is in such an arrival at home. It was very comfortable yesterday to find ourselves once more seated in Goat Lane. Our morning Meeting was solemn. The afternoon Meeting was also comfortable, and a satisfactory reading at Earlham and a cheerful evening over the great parlour fire concluded the day. Yesterday brought the usual round of banking, writing, &c. How pleasant is the settlement into regular domestic life.”*

Now all the different branches of the Gurney family had settled homes. Joseph John with one Church of England sister, Catherine, and one Quaker sister, Priscilla, at Earlham; Samuel and his family at Ham House, to which he had succeeded on the death of his wife's father, Mr. Shepherd, in 1812; Daniel and his sister Rachel at Runcton, both still professing Quakerism, though in its mildest forms; Elizabeth Fry, with her already numerous family, fervent Quakers at Plashet; Richenda Cunningham and her clerical husband in their vicarage of Pakefield; Hannah and Fowell Buxton, now of the same Church, in Brick Lane, near his work in the Brewery; and Louisa Hoare and her family, also members of the Church of England, at the Hill House at Hampstead, which continued to be their life-long home, though they also owned Cliff House at Cromer, and passed the autumn months there almost as one family with the Buxtons. In the autumn of 1817 Priscilla Gurney, now no longer needed at Earlham, went on "a visit of gospel love" to Ireland, visiting the whole of the Friends in the north of the island, and not returning till May 1818.

Katherine Fry writes—

"Thus, in the course of nature, the descendants of

John Gurney of Earlham had branched off into distinct families, dwelling in their various homes, either in Norfolk or in the neighbourhood of London, differing in some respects, yet united by a common bond of strong family affection, tender sympathy, and unbroken harmony. Truly it might be said of them 'if one member suffered, all the members suffered with it.' The numerous cousins were brought up in habits of great intimacy and unrestricted communication, although their parents did not belong to the same religious communities.

"The two brothers, Samuel and Joseph John Gurney, with their sisters Elizabeth and Priscilla, had become decided 'Friends;' their families were therefore brought up in conformity with the doctrines and practice of that body of Christians. The other members of the Earlham family had all united themselves with the Church of England, and trained their children in the same."

## VII

### NEWGATE

“She held that place of high respect which those always will hold who act firmly upon the love and fear of God, and whose bearing reaches the inward testimony in the heart of the beholder; that in nothing do they come forward from self-will, and in nothing do they hold back or compromise the divine teaching; and that, neither deluded by their own voice nor that of others, they know and sedulously follow the voice of the Good Shepherd.”—*M. A. Schimmelpenninck.*

THE thought of what she had seen in Newgate in 1813 had always remained present to Mrs. Fry’s mind, and she had longed to do something for the poor prisoners there. This now seemed possible.

In the winter of 1816–17, Mrs. Fry—“the more than female Howard,” as Sir James Mackintosh called her—with eleven companions, entered upon a systematic course of visits to the prisoners in Newgate. The change they were enabled to effect soon began to attract, far more than she wished, the sympathy and interest of the public.

Her brothers-in-law, Samuel Hoare and Fowell Buxton, had begun to labour in the

same field. One day when they were walking together past Newgate, their conversation had turned upon the exertions of their sister-in-law and her companions for the improvement of the prisoners within its walls, and this suggested the idea of employing themselves in a similar manner. It led to their entering into communication with Mr. Peter Bedford, Mr. William Crawford, Dr. Lushington, the Hon. E. Harbord, and others interested in improving the condition of the English jails; and the "Society for the Reformation of Prison Discipline" was formed in 1816.

On her second visit to the prison, Mrs. Fry, at her own request, was left alone amongst the women for some hours, and on that occasion she read to them the parable of the Lord and the vineyard, and made a few observations on the eleventh hour, and on Christ having come to save sinners, even those who might be said to have wasted the greater part of their lives estranged from Him. Some asked who Christ was; others feared that their day of salvation was past.

Filled with pity for the almost naked children of the prisoners, puny and pining for want of proper air, food, and exercise, Mrs. Fry proposed to their mothers to establish a school for



"I was in prison and you came unto me."





them, which was welcomed with tears of joy. A young woman named Mary Connor, recently committed for stealing a watch, was chosen by universal consent as the first mistress of the school, and fulfilled her duties to perfection. Many of the women entreated to be allowed to attend the school themselves, but owing to the small size of the room, only those under twenty-five could be admitted. Mrs. Fry's friend, Mary Sanderson, who accompanied her on one of her first visits, described afterwards "the railing crowded with half-naked women, struggling together for the front situation with the most boisterous violence and begging with the utmost vociferation."<sup>1</sup> She felt as if she were going into a den of wild beasts, and long recollected the horror of hearing the door closed upon her and knowing that she was "locked in with such a herd of novel and desperate companions."

Mrs. Fry wrote :—

"*Feb.* 24, 1817.—I have been lately much occupied in forming a school in Newgate for the children of the poor prisoners, as well as the young criminals, which has brought much peace and satisfaction with it. But my mind has also been deeply affected in attending a

<sup>1</sup> A beautiful picture by Mrs. Ward depicts this savage crowd of women, and the rapt serenity of Mrs. Fry as she faced them.

poor woman who was executed, I suppose, this morning. I visited her twice. This event has brought me into deep feeling.

*“March 3, 1817.—My mind and time have been much taken up with Newgate and its concerns, and I have felt encouraged about our school. . . . I have had to visit another poor woman before her death, but was permitted to be more upheld, and not to be so much distressed as the time before. May I in this important concern—for so it appears to me to be—be enabled to keep my eye single with the Lord, that what I do may be done heartily unto Him, and not in any degree unto man.”*

“My mother had three great gifts,” writes Katherine Fry, “her dignified and stately presence, her exquisite voice, and her constant and unruffled sweetness of expression—the same to crowned heads and poor prisoners.” As a small band of lady workers gradually collected around Mrs. Fry, the little school in a cell at Newgate became their daily occupation. In her evidence before the House of Commons Mrs. Fry said :—

“It was in our visits to the school, where some of us attended almost every day, that we were witnesses to the dreadful proceedings that went forward on the female side of the prison ; the begging, swearing, gaming, fighting, singing, dancing, dressing up in men’s clothes ; scenes too bad to be described, so that

we did not think it suitable to admit young persons with us."

Gradually the little band of prison visitors began to look beyond the saving of the children to the reclaiming of their mothers, and to this they were encouraged by the women themselves, who soon began clamorously to entreat not to be shut out from the chance of improved habits, and from the benefits which might follow. At first, the prison officials, as well as the friends of the visitors themselves, treated the idea of reclaiming female prisoners as an idle dream. It was also urged that if materials for employing them were found, they would soon be stolen or destroyed. But Mrs. Fry was not to be deterred. In March 1817 we find her writing:—

"My mind is tossed by a variety of interests and duties. . . . I hope I am not undertaking too much. It is a little like being in the whirlwind and the storm; but may I be enabled quietly to perform that which ought to be done; and may all be done so heartily unto the Lord, and through the assistance of His grace, that, if it is consistent with His holy will, His blessing may attend it."

And it did. Already, in the following December, she was able to write:—

"I have found in my late attention to Newgate a peace and prosperity in the undertaking that I seldom, if ever, remember to have felt before. A way has been opened for us beyond all expectations to bring into order the poor prisoners; those who are in power are so very willing to help us—in short, the time appears to be come to work among them. Already, from being wild beasts, they appear harmless and kind. . . . Oh! if good should result, may the praise of the whole be given where it is due, by us and by all, in deep humiliation and prostration of spirit."

The clergyman's wife who, with eleven members of the Society of Friends, had already formed themselves into an "Association for the Improvement of the Female Prisoners in Newgate," stated as their object:—

"To provide for the clothing, the instruction, and the employment of the women; to introduce them to a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and to form in them, as much as possible, those habits of order, sobriety, and industry which may render them docile and peaceable whilst in prison, and respectable when they leave it."

The Sheriffs and City magistrates continued to doubt if the women would be themselves induced to submit to the restraints which it would be necessary to impose upon them to effect this change; but when the assembled

women were asked, one and all declared themselves willing to abide by the rules. Still Mrs. Fry felt that more than this was needed. She had a room cleaned and whitewashed, in which she assembled all the female prisoners who had been tried, and after describing to them the comforts which might be derived from a sober and industrious life, and the misery which must result from such a life as they had hitherto led, she dwelt upon the motives which had brought their visitors to mingle with those from whom all others fled. She assured them that they came armed with no authority, that they required no obedience, and that no rule should be made, no monitor appointed, without the unanimous consent of the women themselves. The rules for employment, those forbidding all swearing, begging, gaming and quarrelling, and those enjoining cleanliness and attention, were then read to the women, and, after each was heard, every hand was held up in joyful acceptance. When the new state of things had continued for some time, the Lord Mayor and several of the Aldermen visited the prison, and from its quiet and orderly cheerfulness could scarcely believe themselves within the same walls which, a few months before, had exhibited "the very utmost

limits of misery and guilt." They marked their sense of the importance of the change by adopting the whole of the new plan as part of the regular system of Newgate. Six months later the Committee received from the untried prisoners an earnest petition, entreating that the same benefits might be conferred upon them, and promising strictest obedience. Their petition was acceded to, though with less definite good result, as prisoners who could still flatter themselves with a hope of release were not inclined to work. A visitor describes what he saw in the prison at this time :—

"I obtained permission to see Mrs. Fry, and was taken to the entrance of the women's wards. On my approach, no loud or angry voices indicated that I was about to enter a place which had long been known as 'Hell above ground.' The courtyard into which I was admitted, instead of being peopled with beings scarcely human, blaspheming, fighting, tearing each others' hair, or gaming with a filthy pack of cards for the very clothes they wore (which often did not suffice even for decency), presented a scene where stillness and propriety reigned. I was conducted by a decently-dressed person, the newly appointed yards-woman, to the door of a ward, where, at the head of a long table, sat a lady belonging to the Society of Friends. She was reading aloud to about sixteen women prisoners, who were engaged in needle-

work around it. Each wore a clean-looking blue apron and bib, with a ticket having a number on it suspended from her neck by a red tape. They all rose on my entrance, curtsied respectfully, and then at a given signal resumed their seats and employments. Instead of a scowl or ill-suppressed laugh, their countenances wore an air of self-respect and gravity, a sort of consciousness of their improved character, and the altered position in which they were placed. I afterwards visited the other wards, which were counterparts of the first."

The Rev. C. B. Tayler writes :<sup>1</sup>—

"I accompanied Mrs. Fry on two occasions to Newgate, and I was present when she read a portion of the Word of God to the women in the room which was then appropriated to that purpose. Tier above tier rose the seats at the end of the room, a gallery of wooden steps many feet high, and extending from wall to wall ; and on that gallery the female prisoners, many of them the very refuse of society, were seated ; and as the eye passed from face to face, different as the features were, the expression of almost every countenance was, in one sense, alike, for they wore the unmistakable stamp of boldness, degradation, and vice ; on some the bleared flatness of face, from whence all trace of womanly feeling had disappeared ; on others the vulgar snivel, seeming from time to time to twist the lips and nose together. It was indeed a shocking and most distressing spectacle, that range

<sup>1</sup> "Personal Recollections."

of about a hundred women's faces, with the various types of vice and crime written on the lines of almost every one. But there they sat in respectful silence, every eye fixed upon the grave sweet countenance of the gentle lady who was about to address them. A table was before her, on which lay the Holy Bible. She seated herself in the chair placed for her, and after a pause for silent prayer of some minutes, she quietly opened the inspired volume. She turned to the Prophet Isaiah, and read aloud the fifty-third chapter, that wonderful and most affecting portion of the Word of God, in which the prophet realised and depicted as an eye-witness the mysterious and unspeakable suffering of the Divine Redeemer. Never till then, and never since then, have I heard any one read as Elizabeth Fry read that chapter—the solemn reverence of her manner, the articulation, so exquisitely modulated, so distinct, that not a word of that sweet and touching voice could fail to be heard. While she read, her mind seemed to be intensely absorbed in the passage of Scripture, and in nothing else. She seemed to take in to her own soul the words which she read, and to apply them to herself; and then she raised her head, and, after another pause of silence, she spoke to the wretched women before her.

“Her address was short, and so simple that it must have been intelligible to the capacities of her hearers; and it was soon evident that it had come home to the hearts of many there by the subdued expression of their countenances, and by the tears that flowed freely from eyes which perhaps had never shed such tears till then. She set forth clearly, forcibly, though with a



mild persuasiveness, the wonderful love of God in sending His own Son to die in the place of sinners, and in accepting the sacrifice of Himself as an atonement for their sins. She told them that it was He who was



THE DOOR OF MRS. FRY'S WARD, NEWGATE.

led as a sheep to the slaughter ; He who was despised and rejected of men ; He who has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows ; and then most impressively she added, ' And the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of

*us all.*' What struck me as most remarkable in her speaking, and no doubt that which won its way so powerfully to the hearts of those abandoned women, was, that she always seemed to class herself with them; she never said 'you,' but 'us,' when speaking of those who were lost, giving them to understand, though not in distinct words, that in the sight of God they were all alike sinners, all alike lost, if not washed in the precious blood of Christ, which alone cleanseth from all sin. Ah! it was indeed in the spirit of Him who never broke the bruised reed nor quenched the smoking flax that she spoke to these degraded women. I have heard many eloquent preachers, but I have never, before or since, listened to one who had so thoroughly imbibed the Master's spirit, or been taught by Him the persuasive power of pleading with sinners for the life of their own souls.

"The effect of her teaching and of her very presence was not confined to that assembly; but, as I passed with her through the different rooms of the prison, where the women were occupied with the various works she had been the means of procuring for them, the looks of tender reverence they cast on her as she moved among them, and the way in which some whispered a blessing after her, testified to the influence she had obtained among them."<sup>1</sup>

The "Chronicles of Newgate" says:—

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<sup>1</sup> The frontispiece of the second volume of these Memoirs, from a picture by Barrett, represents Mrs. Fry reading to the prisoners in Newgate. Behind her stand her brothers Samuel and Joseph John Gurney, her brother-in-law Sir T. Fowell Buxton, and Dr. Ryder, Bishop of Gloucester.

"What Mrs. Fry quickly accomplished against tremendous difficulties is one of the brightest facts in the history of philanthropy. How she persevered in spite of predictions of certain failure, how she won the co-operation of lukewarm officials, how she provided the manual labour for which those poor idle hands were eager, and presently transformed a filthy den of corruption into clean whitewashed rooms, in which sat rows of women, recently so desperate and degraded, stitching and sewing, orderly and silent, was indeed extraordinary."<sup>1</sup>

"Alone, with none to aid,

Like the old seer among the ravening jaws,  
Or that Diviner Figure which beamed hope  
To the poor prisoned spirits waiting long  
The Beatific End, she passed, and brought  
The light of fuller Day, with mild eyes filled  
With gentle pity for their sin, with voice  
So clear, so soft, so musical, the tongue  
As of an angel. 'Mid the noise, the din  
Of blasphemy and rank offence, she spake,  
And hushed all other sound, except the noise  
Of weeping from repentant hearts, and told  
How, even at the eleventh hour, the Lord  
Was strong to save, telling of Him she served,  
Whose name they knew not yet ; and on the depths  
Of those poor rayless souls, sunk deep in ill,  
Shone with some pure reflected light of Heaven,  
And touched—a mother herself—the mothers' hearts  
With pity for the children who should come  
To ill as they did, till the spark Divine,  
Which never dies out quite, shone out once more,  
And once again, from out the sloughs of sin,  
Uprose toward Heaven some faint fair flower of good.

<sup>1</sup> A. Griffiths.

Thus she, and with her a devoted band  
Of women, strove for God. With instant prayer  
She pleaded with them ; clothing, shelter, food  
She gained for them, and tidings of the Word.  
And for those hapless childish lives she found  
Fit teaching ; those poor souls the pitiless law  
Doomed to the felon's end, she fortified,  
As did of old S. Catherine, with her prayers,  
Even at the gate of Death."<sup>1</sup>

Gradually the Ladies' Committee was encouraged to introduce a matron into Newgate, to be paid in part by themselves, in part by the Corporation ; but till this time, some of the ladies spent the whole day in the prison, taking their provisions in a basket, or remaining without any ; and, for long afterwards, one or two of them never failed to spend some hours daily with the female prisoners.

During this eventful year Mrs. Fry had been set the more free to her work because her boys were at school, and her girls absent on a very long visit to their uncle Daniel Gurney and his sister Rachel at North Runcton.

Mrs. Fry's brothers and sisters helped her, not only with sympathy, but with funds. Indeed, far beyond any other pecuniary assistance, was that which Mrs. Fry received from her own brothers Samuel and Joseph John Gurney, who not only entered warmly into all her objects

<sup>1</sup> Lewis Morris.

of interest, but were unfailing in the generous support they afforded them. From that time until her labours of love were ended on earth, not one year elapsed in which they did not liberally, even magnificently, contribute to her various purposes of benevolence. Perhaps this was more especially the case with her brother Samuel, who, as he advanced in life, appeared more and more in the character of the philanthropist, ever at hand when duty called to promote any object which he considered would tend to the benefit of mankind. His was a direct mission no less than that of other members of his family more prominently before the public eye; and in much of the benevolent machinery so beautifully worked by them he might be called the mainstay.<sup>1</sup>

In the following winter, the story of the reformation of Newgate having gone abroad, Mrs. Fry was beset by letters of inquiry from all parts of the country, chiefly from ladies who wished to imitate her example in the country towns, and who deserved lengthy and careful answers. Innumerable petitions also reached her from those who thought her purse as inexhaustible as her good-will, "humbly praying" for assistance, whilst others besought employment or desired advice.

<sup>1</sup> See Memoir.

"These letters required to be read and considered, and, although far the greater number were laid aside, others were of a nature that Mrs. Fry could not feel satisfied to pass unnoticed. Time was necessary to do any real good in extricating deserving families from difficulties. But her benevolence was of that cast that she could hardly endure to know others were wanting the necessaries of life, whilst she was herself surrounded by superfluities and luxuries, and she never refused the request of any of these applicants without pain. The cases of many of the prisoners also demanded much time and attention."

The executions—for theft and arson as well as murder—tried Mrs. Fry most of all. Thus she writes :—

"*March* 1817.—I have suffered much about the hanging of the criminals, having had to visit another poor woman before her death. This again tried me a good deal, but I was more upheld, and not so much distressed as before."

And again, after seeing a woman condemned to death for being accessory to a robbery :—

"I have just returned from a most melancholy visit to Newgate, where I have been at the request of Elizabeth Fricker, previous to her execution to-morrow morning, at eight o'clock. I found her much hurried, distressed, and tormented in mind, her hands cold and covered with something like the perspiration

preceding death, and in a universal tremor. The women who were with her said she had been so outrageous before we came, that they thought a man must be sent for to manage her. However, after a serious time with her, her troubled soul became calmed. But is it for man thus to take the prerogative of the Almighty into his own hands?

"Besides this poor young woman, there are also six men to be hanged, one of whom has a wife, also condemned, near her confinement, and seven young children. Since the awful report came down, he has become quite mad, from horror of mind. A strait-waistcoat could not keep him within bounds: he had just bitten the turnkey—I saw the man come out with his hand bleeding as I passed the cell."

During the following spring there were continual executions; there were no data by which to form any conclusion, no reasons to be discovered for the selections made; every one knew he might suffer, though every one hoped to escape.

"Among the rest was a woman named Harriet Skelton; a very child might have read her countenance, open, confiding, expressing strong feeling, but neither hardened in depravity nor capable of cunning: her story bore out this impression. Under the influence of the man she loved, she had passed forged notes.

"She was ordered for execution; the sentence was unlooked for, her deportment in the prison had been

good, amenable to regulations, quiet and orderly; indeed some of her companions in guilt were heard to say that they supposed she was chosen for death because she was better prepared than the rest of them. Her case excited the strongest compassion. Mrs. Fry was even vehemently urged to exert herself in behalf of this unfortunate woman: there were circumstances of extenuation, but they were not of a nature to alter the letter of the law. Still, on Mrs. Fry's entreaty, the Duke of Gloucester made a noble effort to save Skelton by an application to Lord Sidmouth, and with the same view he accompanied Mrs. Fry to the Bank Directors. All, however, was in vain; the law took its course, and the woman was hanged."

Mrs. Fry's daughter, Rachel Cresswell, writes:—

"The successive executions of two women for forgery led to our mother's becoming intensely interested in the question of capital punishment.

"In those days the system of prosecution and punishment for forgery was horrible. There was a sort of juggle by which a prisoner pleading guilty to the minor count escaped death. Then, out of those who had been chosen as the more guilty, and not allowed this privilege, one was here and there selected to be hanged, when the time had arrived for another example to be made.

"The two women I have alluded to had neither of them committed forgery in any aggravated form; against one of them no kind of crime was alleged, but



that under the influence of the man she loved she had in an evil hour put her name to documents she scarcely understood.

"To the dark dismal cell where her last hours on earth were spent, our mother's sense of duty took her. Every exertion to obtain a reprieve had been in vain. Nothing remained but to endeavour to strengthen its wretched inmate to endure, and to exhort her even at that eleventh hour to seek for pardon through Christ.

"At that time an opinion was very prevalent among the lower orders, that the extreme disproportion of the punishment to the crime in all cases of forgery or fraud, unattended by personal violence, placed the transgressor in the position of the injured party, so that more sinned against than sinning, he became a sort of martyr, and would no doubt be received into heaven. Grievously did this idea operate when these victims of a harsh and uncertain law found themselves under sentence of execution. It hardened their hearts against repentance, because their sense of the sin was lost in their belief in the far greater sinfulness of the punishment.

"Our mother went to bid Harriet Skelton farewell the afternoon before her death. She felt it acutely. There was something terrible to her in life being taken from one in the full possession of mental and physical vigour. One woman had said to her the day before she was hanged, 'I feel life so strong within me, that I cannot believe that this time to-morrow I am to be dead.'

"It was a matter of no small interest to us to know how our mother would deal with the difficult state of

mind I have endeavoured to describe. She dwelt but lightly on the individual crime for which Harriet was about to suffer, but she drew a strong picture of her former mode of life, her vicious habits and depraved conduct, her sinfulness against her fellow-creatures, but still more her sinfulness against God. Having thus convinced her reason, she appealed to her heart; she described the compassion, the long-suffering of God, the heinousness of sin in His sight; that it pleased Him to permit her crimes to be punished in this awful death, but that the Son of His love had endured a far more awful death, far more intense sufferings, 'though without sin.'<sup>1</sup> Tears flowed abundantly; the heart of the poor woman seemed melted within her. And then rose the thrilling tones of our mother's voice, with exquisite tenderness, with holy fervour, commending her to Him who was willing and able to deliver her 'soul from death,' to support her through the last conflict of mortal agony, and to receive her for ever to Himself.

"The execution of these unhappy women, and that of some ignorant young persons, about the same time, roused public attention. Various opinions were broached; the newspapers were filled with paragraphs; pamphlets were published; discussions continually arose in society whether under the Christian dispensation man had the right to take the life of his fellow-man for offences solely connected with property. Into this question our mother entered with intense interest; she was decided in her opinion that so doing was warranted neither by reason nor Scripture. Many whose names have since figured as

<sup>1</sup> Heb. iv. 15.

statesmen, men of letters, and philanthropists united with her in those views."

A writer in the *Christian Penny Magazine*<sup>1</sup> says :—

"Time, distance, and crime may deaden the best feelings of nature; but let some unexpected occasion recall vividly to the mind the acts of a good mother or friend, and the feelings which were supposed to be extinct will be powerfully awakened. A striking instance of this nature was related to me in the bush by a woman who had been confined with several hundreds of others in the Female Factory near Sydney. This woman was a Catholic, and when in England was under the care of Mrs. Fry. . . . In speaking of that lady she said, 'We true Roman Catholics looked upon her with doubt, and this fear prevented her doing as much good amongst us as she otherwise would; for bad as we were, we looked upon it as the last fall to give up our faith. But Mrs. Fry had a remarkable way with her—a sort of speaking that you could hardly help listening to, whether you would or no; for she was not only very good, but very clever.

" 'Well, just to avoid listening when she was speaking or reading, I learnt to count twelve backwards and forwards, so that my mind was quite taken up. It was a pity we had such a dread. Mrs. Fry had a way of speaking to one of us alone, and I was very anxious to shuffle this lecture: the fact was, I expected she would put many questions, and as I altogether respected her

<sup>1</sup> For April 1850.

character too much to tell her a lie, I kept away from the sermon, as we in derision used to call it.

“‘But when she was taking leave of us, she just called me on one side, saying she would like to speak a few words to me. So, says I to myself, “I’m caught at last.”

“‘Well, she came close to me, and looking at me in a very solemn sort of a way, she laid her hands upon my shoulders, and yet her very fingers seemed to have a feeling of kindness towards me, and she gave me a pressure that told she felt for me; her thumbs were set firm and hard upon my shoulders. But it was no lecture she gave me: all she said was, ‘Let not thine eyes covet.’ No other words passed her lips, but then her words were low and awful—kind as a mother, yet like a judge. Well, when I got to the colony, I went on right enough for a time, but one day I was looking into a work-box belonging to my mistress, and a gold thimble tempted me. It was on my finger and in my pocket in an instant; but, just as I was going to shut down the box-lid, as sure as I am telling you, I felt Mrs. Fry’s thumbs on my shoulders—the gentle pleading touch of her fingers—and I gave one look about me, threw back the thimble, and trembled with terror to find I was alone in the room.’”

· One of the subjects which occupied the attention of the “Ladies’ Newgate Association” was improving the arrangements for the removal of female convicts for transportation.

“It was a practice amongst the female transports to

riot previous to their departure from Newgate, breaking windows, furniture, or whatever came within their reach. They were generally conveyed from the prison to the water-side in open waggons, went off shouting amidst assembled crowds, and were noisy and disorderly on the road and in the boats. Mrs. Fry prevailed on the Governor to consent to their being moved in hackney coaches. She then promised the women, if they would be quiet and orderly, that she and other ladies would accompany them to Deptford, and see them on board. Accordingly, when the time came, no disturbance took place; the women in hackney coaches, with turnkeys in attendance, formed a procession, which was closed by her carriage, and they all behaved well upon the road. When on board the ship, the ladies were distressed to see so many women and children huddled together below deck. They were to be divided into messes of six each, and as each woman must of necessity associate the most with those of her own mess, it seemed to be a good opportunity to class and number them. This was no sooner proposed than accepted by all concerned in the arrangement: they were divided into classes of twelve, including the monitor, chosen from the number by the women themselves. As far as possible those whose ages or criminality were similar were placed together. Each class contained two messes. The superintendence thus became as complete as the nature of the case would permit. There were one hundred and twenty-eight convicts, besides their unhappy children.

“Employment and instruction were still wanting; the women complained of having nothing to do. To pro-

cure work for a hundred and twenty-eight persons, during so long a voyage, appeared to be a hopeless endeavour; and even if it could be obtained from Government or individuals, it would have been useless to give it to them, with no responsible person to take charge either of its execution or appropriation. The ladies were told that patchwork and fancy-work found a ready sale in New South Wales. They accordingly made it known that they required little pieces of coloured cotton for this purpose, and, in a few days, so many were sent from the different Manchester houses in London as, aided by some knitting, fully supplied the women with work. The time and ingenuity required in patchwork rendered it a particularly suitable occupation; and as the convicts were to have the things when done, to sell for their own profit on arrival, it was evidently their interest to turn their skill to the best account. By this means another important good was effected, for at that time no factory or barrack of any description existed for the reception of the women when landed in the colony, not so much as a hut in which they could take refuge, so that they were literally driven to vice, or left to lie in the streets. Now, the proceeds of their industry on board ship, though small, would enable such as desired it to obtain shelter until engaged as servants, or until they could find some respectable means of subsistence. A fact that occurred the following year, in the *Wellington* female convict ship, showed the correctness of this opinion, and how well patchwork had answered the intended purpose, for when the ship touched at Rio de Janeiro the quilts made by the women were there sold

for a guinea each. Under the care of each monitor, Bibles, Prayer-Books, and religious tracts were placed for the use of her class; arrangements were also made to enable those who could not read and wished to learn to have the opportunity of doing so.

“Still, though some provision was thus made for the necessities of the women, the poor children were in misery and ignorance. Fourteen of these were of an age to receive instruction. With some difficulty a small space towards the after part of the vessel was set apart as a school. There, during the greater part of the day, they were taught to read, knit, and sew. One of the convicts undertook to be schoolmistress, and a reward for her was placed in the hands of the captain, to be given if she persevered in her duties to the end of the voyage. During the five weeks that the ship lay in the river, some of the ladies engaged in the prison-work devoted much of their time to making these arrangements. At an expense of £72, 10s., working materials and aprons were procured for the women, and additional clothing for the most destitute. The good effects of these regulations were speedily seen, though few were sanguine as to their continuing in force after the ship had fairly put to sea, when there would be no longer any stimulus or inducement to persevere.

“The last visit that Mrs. Fry paid to the *Maria*, whilst she lay at Deptford, was one of those solemn occasions that leave a lasting impression on the minds of those who witness them. Great uncertainty had prevailed as to whether the poor convicts would see their benefactress again. But now they saw her

standing at the door of the cabin, attended by her friends and the captain. The women on the quarter-deck faced her. The sailors, anxious to see what was going on, had clambered into the rigging, upon the capstan, or mingled in the outskirts of the group. But the silence was profound when Mrs. Fry opened her Bible, and in a clear audible voice read a portion from it. The crews of the other vessels in the tier, attracted by the novelty of the scene, were leaning over the ships on either side, and seeming to listen with great attention. When she closed the Bible, after a short pause, she knelt down on the deck, and implored a blessing on this work of Christian charity from that God who, though one may sow and another water, can alone give the increase. Many of the women wept bitterly, all seemed touched. As Mrs. Fry left the ship they followed her with their eyes and their blessings, until her boat having passed within another tier of vessels, they could see her no more."

"Oft, in some frail skiff,  
Daring the wintry Thames, ere the sad ship  
Sailed with its load, her soft imploring voice  
Rose high for all, commending them to Heaven.  
And pleading with such gentle words and pure,  
Their hard hearts melted, and the flowing tears  
Relieved their pain ; and on the deck around  
The rude rough seamen heard, without a word,  
The saint's high message and the sweet clear tones,  
And grew ashamed to scoff ; while as she knelt  
The helpless women checked their gathering tears  
In silence, till the dark boat on the stream  
Was lost in night, that took their only friend." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lewis Morris.





*I was washed and you clothed me*



Innumerable are the instances recorded of the peculiar influence which Mrs. Fry's innate powers of sympathy gave her over those she met with. A friend narrates how—

“Walking with her one morning down Lombard Street, we met a woman decently dressed, but who appeared to be very sorrowful. She asked no relief, nor did she seek to attract attention. Yet Mrs. Fry, as if prompted or impelled by some superior power, let go my arm, and turning to the woman, said, ‘Thou appearest to be in trouble; tell me, I beseech thee, the cause of thy sorrow, for perhaps I can assist thee and afford thee relief.’ The woman hesitated; but Mrs. Fry, perceiving her burdened spirit, led her to the house of her brother in the same street; and there, by her kind solicitude, was told of her trouble. She needed no pecuniary assistance, but only the counsels of a wise and kind friend, whom she had thus most unexpectedly found. The unlooked-for sympathy she received saved her from misery and self-destruction, for she afterwards showed how, when met by Mrs. Fry, she was on her way to drown herself in the Thames.”<sup>1</sup>

Joseph John Gurney says :—

“The law of love, which might be said to be ever on her lips, was deeply engraven on the heart of Elizabeth Fry; and her charity, in the best and most comprehensive sense of the term, flowed freely forth towards

<sup>1</sup> See T. Timpson's “Memoirs of Mrs. Fry.”

her fellow-men of every class, of every condition. Thus with a peculiar grace she won her way, and almost always obtained her object. One of the qualities which tended powerfully to this result was her patience—her indomitable perseverance. She was never one of those who embraced a philanthropic project warmly, and as readily forgot it. But month after month, and year after year, she laboured in any plan of mercy which she had thought it her duty to undertake, and she never forsook it in heart or feeling, even when her health failed, or other circumstances, not under her control, closed the door for a time on her personal exertions. With this spirit of perseverance she combined a peculiar versatility and readiness for seizing every passing occasion, and converting it into an opportunity of usefulness. She was not only always willing, but always prepared, always ready (by a kind of mental sleight of hand) to do good, be it ever so little, to a child, a servant, a waiter at an inn, a friend, a neighbour, a stranger!"

On the occasion of the annual general meeting of the Society of Friends, the Frys' house in St. Mildred's Court always welcomed Priscilla Hannah Gurney, the now aged Quakeress cousin,<sup>1</sup> who had much influenced Elizabeth Fry in her early life. Katherine Fry describes her as "small in person, beautiful in counte-

<sup>1</sup> Priscilla Hannah and her sister Christiana were daughters of Joseph Gurney and his wife Christiana Barclay, and were first cousins of Elizabeth Fry's father. The "Memoirs of Priscilla Hannah Gurney" were published, edited by Sarah Allen.

nance, elegant in manner, dressed in the old-fashioned black silk hood then still retained by Friends, delicate in health, and, notwithstanding her having become a plain Friend and a minister, almost fastidiously refined in habit." Daniel Gurney speaks of her as a strict Quakeress and preacher, rarely beautiful, small in person and features, singularly refined, and, in her black hood, like a fine portrait by Cornelius Jansen.<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Fry now frequently spoke as a minister

<sup>1</sup> "Priscilla Hannah Gurney was one of those persons whom no one having once seen could ever forget. The remembrance of her became enshrined in one's memory. She combined the expression of holiness and purity with that of the greatest delicacy of perception and intelligent flexibility both of mind and heart. Her stature was small, but perfect in symmetry; her features were chiselled with exquisite delicacy; her countenance announced the deep peace and sensibility which arise from a finely perceptive intellect, combined with placid and serene affections. She had what is called a helmeted eyelid, and a beautiful and serenely arched eyebrow, which contributed to the devout and tranquil expression, whilst her dark intelligent eyes, her well-developed eye-bone, and beautifully formed nose, indicated at once strength and acuteness of intelligence and great delicacy of taste.

"Her costume was that of the strictest Friends of that day. How well I remember her coarse stuff gown contrasted with the exquisite beauty and delicacy of her arms and hands, her snow-white handkerchief, and her little grey shawl, her dark brown hair divided after the manner of a gothic arch over her fair forehead. Then she wore a black silk hood over her cap, and over all a black beaver bonnet, in the shape of a pewter plate, which was then esteemed the official dress of (acknowledged ministers in) the gallery. Her voice was most musical and enchanting; sweetness and flexibility was its characteristic. Her words descended like dew on the soul, penetrating and abiding there, and after many days bringing forth fruit."—*M. A. Schimmelpenninck.*

in the Friends' Meeting-house in Gracechurch Street, which she regularly attended, where, according to her Quaker expression, "way was often made for her to declare publicly the goodness of our gracious and holy Helper." Occasionally, also, she preached at the larger Meeting-house at Devonshire House, Bishops-gate Street,<sup>1</sup> generally with fluency and ease, and with a wonderfully touching manner and expression. She recounts one occasion there, however, when—

"In prayer I was in a few words much helped. And when first engaged in testimony [preaching], for a short time all did well; then the enemy came in like a flood to overwhelm me, and, without any apparent want of sense or clearness, I sat down."

James Sherman, Minister of Surrey Chapel, writes<sup>2</sup> of "the silver tones of Elizabeth Fry's voice, and the majestic mien with which she delivered the message of God," which could never be forgotten.

But Mrs. Fry's winning and musical voice

<sup>1</sup> This great establishment, occupying the site of the old Dolphin Inn and of the mansion of the Earls of Devonshire, comprises three Meeting-houses—that used for the great yearly meetings, that for special meetings, and that known as the Women's Meeting-house. There is a gallery at Devonshire House filled with Quaker portraits of considerable interest.

<sup>2</sup> Life of William Allen, p. 462.

was in later days most frequently heard in the Meeting-house which she generally attended near her country home of Plashet. This was the "old Meeting-house" of Plaistow, which, built in 1819, had a stone portico and pillars, from Wanstead House, added to it in 1832. No less than twenty carriages then brought Quaker families resident in the neighbourhood to the meeting at Plaistow. John Bright was often amongst them.

The Rev. C. B. Tayler writes :—

"Finding, while I was visiting her at Plashet, that Mrs. Fry had to attend a meeting of Friends in the neighbourhood, I begged to be allowed to accompany her, saying that I did not ask from mere curiosity, but that I felt a real interest in all that concerned the body of Christians to which she was united, and wished to see for myself how their meetings were conducted. She kindly took me with her in their family coach. Little was said as we drove along, but before we arrived at the place of meeting, Mrs. Fry turned to me and said, 'Perhaps not a word will be spoken at our meeting to-day; but thou must not suppose that, though we sit there in silence, our thoughts are not occupied with Divine things. We are waiting on the Lord till He enables us to speak.' After entering the building, and taking our places, so long a silence prevailed that I began to think that we should depart as we had come, without hearing the sound of a human voice. But after a very long pause a Quaker gentleman rose up,

and spoke of the great comfort he had received in a time of deep domestic affliction from certain portions of Holy Scripture, which he repeated, believing that they might, with the Divine blessing, afford much consolation to any of the Friends who were present, and who might be in like distress with himself. He said no more, but resumed his seat; and then so long a pause of silence followed that I thought the meeting would indeed break up without another word being spoken. Thus, I can hardly express the satisfaction I felt when Mrs. Fry herself arose to speak. After the remark she had made to me in the carriage, my thoughts had been constantly occupied with those few affecting words which our Lord had spoken to His three disciples during His agony in the garden of Gethsemane, 'Could ye not watch with Me one hour?' and when I saw her about to speak, I could not help saying to myself, 'I hope she will speak on those same words.' But it was a pleasant surprise when, in the clear and solemn voice which was so peculiar to her, she said, 'One portion of Scripture has much occupied my mind during our meeting here: the words of the Lord Jesus in His hour of suffering, those words which He addressed to His disciples at that season of darkness, "What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?"' I could not attempt, even if my memory did not fail me, to record the words she spoke, so full of solemn and tender emotion, so touching a commentary on those never-to-be-forgotten words of gentle remonstrance from Him who was about to undergo all the mysterious anguish of the cross for guilty sinners. But I have frequently felt that if such edifying instructions were to be often heard



at a Quakers' meeting, I should feel it a high privilege to be present."

Mrs. T. Geldart writes :—

"I have seen Elizabeth Fry in my childhood, have felt her soft touch, and heard the sweet tones of her melodious voice, sweet always, but doubly so to the little ones, and I have been conscious of breathing an atmosphere of love. I have seen and heard her in large assemblies, soothing, in a manner so peculiarly her own, all that was adverse, and smoothing all that was ruffled, until her own spirit seemed to rest on those to whom she spoke. I have seen her in the house of sorrow and of mourning, when hearts were ready to break from sore bereavement, and the loving look was a balm, the tones were as delicious music; so soft, so compassionate, so thrilling, that one could scarcely tell whether it was the words she spoke or the manner of those words that entered the heart, and there spread peace and calmness."<sup>1</sup>

In August 1818, Mrs. Fry, accompanied by her brother Joseph John and his wife, and one of her own daughters, went to the north of England and to Scotland on the affairs of the Society of Friends, visiting the prisons in the towns they passed through. A niece of Dr. Stewart, who saw her in the prisons at Glasgow, thus describes her :—

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<sup>1</sup> "The Pathway of Love."

“She is about forty, tall, sedate, with a physiognomy gentle but very observing, at first not giving or calling for much sympathy. Her manner is free and unembarrassed. She met, by appointment, several of the magistrates and a number of ladies at Bridewell. She told them with simplicity what had been done at Newgate, proposing something similar for Glasgow. She entered into pleasant conversation with every one. All were delighted when she offered to speak a little to the poor women ; but the keeper of Bridewell said he feared it was a dangerous experiment, for that they never but by compulsion listened to reading, and were generally disposed to laugh and turn all into ridicule. Mrs. Fry said she was not without fear of this happening, but she thought it might give pleasure to some. The women, about one hundred, were assembled in a large room, and when we went in, were misdoubting and lowering. Mrs. Fry took off her little bonnet, and sat down on a low seat fronting the women. She looked round with a kind conciliating manner, but with an eye that met every one there. She said, ‘I had better tell you what we are come about.’ She described how she had had to do with a great many poor women—sadly wicked, more wicked than any one present—and how they had recovered from evil. Her language was often Biblical, always referring to our Saviour’s promises, and cheering the desolate beings with holy hope. ‘Would you like to turn from that which is wrong ; would you *like* it,’ she said, ‘if ladies were to visit and speak comfort to you, and try to help you to be better ? You could tell them your griefs, for they who have done wrong have many sorrows.’ As she

read them the rules, asking them if they approved, she asked them to hold up their hands if they acceded. From the first many hands were upraised, and as she spoke tears began to fall. One very beautiful girl near me had her eyes swimming in tears, and her lips moved as if following Mrs. Fry's words. An old woman who held a Bible we saw pressing upon it, as she became more and more impressed. The hands were now almost all ready to rise at every pause, and these callous and obdurate offenders were with one consent bowed before her. In this moment she took the Bible, and read the parables of the Lost Sheep and the Piece of Silver, and of the Prodigal Son. It is not in my power to express to you the effect of her saintly voice. In speaking such blessed words, she often paused and looked at the 'poor women' (as she named them) with such sweetness as won all their confidence, and she applied different parts of the story with a delicacy and beauty such as I never heard before. 'His father saw him when he was yet afar off.' The reading was succeeded by a solemn pause, and then, resting her large Bible upon the ground, we suddenly saw Mrs. Fry kneeling before the women. Her prayer was beyond words—soothing and elevating, and I felt her musical voice in the peculiar recitative of the Quakers to be like a mother's song to a suffering child.

"We found sixteen women in the prison. She had only time to read the rules to them and to converse a little. Her proposal of work was in general greedily received. We saw much more varied emotions there than at Bridewell—astonishment, repugnance, and, in one or two cases, obstinate resistance, whilst others

we saw listening with anxious desire to accept her aid. One old woman, with very hardened features, said, 'Na, na, nae work'—but even her rugged features afterwards relaxed, and I saw a tear fall upon her brown cheeks. Not only the prisoners were touched. Not a man present was unmoved. . . . Now Mrs. Fry is hastening back to her eight children, and she has not a thought, nor time, nor strength to give away to anything but the object of prison discipline."

Joseph John Gurney's journal describes a visit which, during this tour, was paid by the party to Knowsley.

"*Oct. 3, 1818.*—Lord and Lady Derby, with others of the family, met us at the door, and received us most heartily. Lord Derby is an elderly man with a very kind manner; Lady Derby, somewhat younger, is very interesting and pleasing, quite free from affectation—rather like Catherine. Her disinterestedness becomes perceptible in the little occurrences of the day, and her conversation is attractive from the force of her mind, which is evidently under the power of religion.<sup>1</sup> She lost her only son about a year ago, and this seems to have had a great effect upon her. It happened that my person reminded her of her lost boy—at once an introduction to her good graces. Lord and Lady Derby were surrounded at Knowsley by a large and patriarchal family, consisting chiefly of Stanleys and Hornbys. The most conspicuous individuals are Lord

<sup>1</sup> Miss Eliza Farren, the well-known actress, married Edward, twelfth Earl of Derby, in 1797.

Stanley, his daughter Charlotte,<sup>1</sup> and his son Edward,<sup>2</sup> a clever and respectable youth. Lady Mary,<sup>3</sup> a most sweet girl, remarkable for her elegance and simplicity, is Lady Derby's only remaining child. The mother of the Hornbys, Lord Derby's sister, a stout good-natured old lady, is surrounded by several pleasing well-principled daughters, besides sons, and sons' wives.

"I have seldom, if ever, seen so much apparent love and harmony prevailing without any form over a large family circle. The afternoon and evening were agreeably spent in not trifling conversation. A crowd thronged around Elizabeth Fry, whose tales were thoroughly relished. For myself, I spent part of the evening in a very interesting conversation with Lady Derby on religious subjects: she is not without misinformation and prejudice about religious people, but I fully believe she possesses the principle.

"Before breakfast the next morning Lady Mary and Charlotte Stanley took us in a carriage to their girls' schools, which are in excellent order. They seem to take great pains with their neighbours—Lord Derby gives prizes annually to those of his cottagers who most excel in neatness and propriety. After breakfast we ventured to propose the whole family being assembled together. Elizabeth Fry had felt a strong concern for this object, and I was willing to bear the burthen with her. The proposal was most readily acceded to, and nearly the whole family, including servants—about

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lady Charlotte Penrhyn.

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards 14th Earl of Derby—the Prime Minister.

<sup>3</sup> Married, 1821, Thomas, second Earl of Wilton.

seventy persons in all—assembled in the dining-room. After a short pause, I began by reading the third chapter of St. John's Gospel. I can hardly describe how strange I felt my situation to be. The religious opportunity which followed, and which lasted nearly an hour, was truly very sweet and very solemn. I have scarcely ever known a time of such apparent baptism of the Spirit. Dear Elizabeth Fry prayed almost as soon as I had done reading. Much power attended her. I afterwards felt unusual power in preaching the Gospel to this interesting party, from one of the verses we had been reading—'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,' &c. Elizabeth Fry afterwards spoke, and I was enabled to pray in conclusion. We may thankfully acknowledge that our Blessed Master was pleased on this occasion to send us help from the sanctuary. I have seldom known more of the flowing of love, and this in the unity of the Spirit. Almost all present, old and young, appeared to be brought to tears, some to many tears. As soon as our meeting broke up, Lord Derby came up to me and kissed our hands, and then turned to the window and wept. . . . They were all truly loving and affectionate, quite clinging to us, and unwilling to part from us."

In this year Mrs. Fry, by royal desire, was invited to meet Queen Charlotte at the Mansion House.

"It was a subject for Hayter—the diminutive stature of the Queen, covered with diamonds, but her counte-

nance lighted up with an expression of the kindest benevolence; Mrs. Fry, her simple Quaker's dress adding to the height of her figure, though a little flushed, preserving her wonted calmness of look and manner; several of the bishops standing near her; the platform crowded with waving feathers, jewels, and orders; the noble hall lined with spectators, and in the centre, hundreds of poor children brought there to be examined, from their different schools. The English nation may be slow in perceiving the beauty of a moral sentiment, but when perceived appreciates it the more highly. A murmur of applause ran through the assembly, followed by a simultaneous clap and a shout, which was taken up by the multitude without, and died away in the distance. They hailed the scene before them; they saw in it not so much the queen and the philanthopist as royalty offering its meed of approval at the shrine of mercy and good works."

KATHERINE FRY to her Aunt MRS. BUXTON.

"*Plasht*, May 3, 1818.—My Aunt Catherine has commissioned me to write thee a description of our day at the Mansion House—it was the 19th of last month. . . . With infinite difficulty we got into the ante-room. In a few minutes some men in very grand liveries came in a great hurry to clear the way and lay down a piece of scarlet cloth; the cry was, 'The Queen is coming.' We looked through the entrance-door, and saw mamma (!) with the Bishop of Gloucester (!), and Lady Harcourt with Alderman Wood. Silence had been previously ordered as a mark of respect, but a

buzz of 'Mrs. Fry, Mrs. Fry,' ran through the room. It was to our utter astonishment that we saw them come in and walk along those spread carpets, Lady Harcourt in full court-dress, on the arm of the Alderman in his scarlet gown, and secondly the Bishop of Gloucester (Ryder) in lawn sleeves, leading our darling mother in her plain Friend's cap, one of the light scarf cloaks worn by plain Friends, and a dark silk gown—I see her now! her light flaxen hair, a little flush on her face from the bustle and noise she had passed through, and her sweet, lovely, placid smile. In a few minutes the Queen passed, followed by the Princesses, the Royal Dukes, the Lady Mayoress, and other official personages. . . .

"The Lord Mayor placed us behind the hustings on which the Queen was. We asked him for mamma. He burst out laughing: 'There she is, on the bench of Bishops. There were eight of them there. We heard people pointing her out one to another: 'That is she with her hair over her forehead.'—'That must be Mrs. Fry with the Bishops.'—'Look now! you may see Mrs. Fry; she rises to receive the Queen's salute.'

"Towards the close, after 'God save the King' had been sung, everybody began to clap violently, and we asked the cause. 'Why, the Queen is speaking to Mrs. Fry.' When Queen Charlotte rose to go, she paused and passed to the side where the Bishops sat—of course all had risen—and Lady Harcourt presented our mother.

"The Queen, who is so short, courtesying, and our mother, who is so tall, not courtesying, was very awkward. Her Majesty asked our mother if she were



not afraid of going into prisons, how far she lived from London, how many children she had, &c.

“The shouts in the hall were tremendous, and were caught up by the crowds outside; it was told why they shouted, and it was repeated again and again, till it reached our father, sitting in his office at St. Mildred’s Court, that ‘the Queen was speaking to Mrs. Fry.’”

Of this time Joseph John Gurney’s journal says:—“Betsy’s example, conversation, deportment, and ministry, have been most teaching; but even more particularly striking is her deep humility amidst the love and applause of her fellow-creatures, who now gather round her on all occasions.” Mrs. Fry wrote at this time:—

“*Plashet, October 28, 1818.*—Entering my public life again is very serious to me, more particularly my readings at Newgate. They are, to my feelings, too much like making a show of a good thing, yet we have so often been favoured in them, to the tendering of many hearts, that I believe I must not be hasty in preventing them, or hindering people coming to them; and it is the desire and prayer of my heart that a way may rightly open about them, and that when engaged in them, I may do what I do heartily unto the Lord, and not unto man, and look neither to the good or evil opinion of men. The prudent fears that the *good* have for me try me more than most things, and I find that it calls for Christian forbearance not to be a little put

out by them. I am confident that we often see the Martha spirit enter about spiritual things; I know by myself what it is to be over-busy. O Lord, enable us to keep our ranks in righteousness, and pardon the iniquity of even our holy things, of our omissions and commissions, and be pleased to enable Thy poor unworthy child and servant to cleave very close to Thee in spirit. And if it should please Thee that she should again be brought forth to be as a spectacle amongst the people, be pleased to keep her from ever hurting or bringing discredit upon Thy ever-blessed cause. Oh, enable her to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before Thee and all men, and so to abide in the light and life of Christ, her Saviour and Redeemer, that many may be led to glorify Thee, her Father who is in heaven.

"Thou, Lord, who alone knowest the heart, knowest the desires of my heart after Thyself, and the preservation that cometh from Thee. All the rest is comparatively small in my view."

Whilst the path of Elizabeth Fry, the Buxtons, and Hoares lay amid such heart-stirring scenes, we must return to Rachel Gurney's journals for glimpses of the quiet family life in Norfolk.<sup>1</sup>

"*Earlham, October 5, 1818.*—Simeon, on arriving in the evening on a visit, commented on the attributes of

<sup>1</sup> Seventeen closely written quarto volumes of Rachel Gurney's journals—chiefly religious—remain in the family, written between 1802 and 1826. Before 1802 her daily journal was sent to Henry Enfield.



"I was thirsty and ye gave me drink."



God. Betsy encouraged him to feel the most entire liberty of speaking when he thought it right: she said the liberty of the Spirit should be the motto over her door. Joseph prayed, and they sang hymns in the evening."

"*Earlham, October 22.*—Priscilla spoke at meeting on the Peace of God, only to be obtained through the knowledge of Christ. She now preaches constantly."

"*Runcton, March 7, 1819.*—A visit from Priscilla has been delightful. Surely she is an instance of the powers of a devoted life, and an eminent example of the beauty of a meek and quiet spirit."

"*August 21.*—Several days at Earlham with dearest Priscilla. Her purified and *devoted* state is most striking and affecting."

In the spring of 1819 the health of Priscilla, the youngest of the Gurney sisters, began to fail. Rachel passed the winter of 1819–20 with her in the Isle of Wight. After her return to Earlham, it became evident that she was sinking in decided decline. The constant agitation of mind, "the travail of spirit" in which she lived, had worn out her delicate frame. Living on the portals of heaven herself, she ever had sympathy with all, even with those whose opinions most differed from her own. She would sometimes say smilingly that one of the things which had been most instructive to her was "the biography of the irreligious."

Most of all was her spiritual communion unbroken with her sisters Hannah and Louisa, now, with their households, members of the Church of England. "More of heaven I never saw," wrote Charles Simeon to Joseph John Gurney in 1820, "than in the two families at Hampstead." For the Buxtons and Hoares were then living close to each other in ever-increasing unity, both religious and social. Louisa Gurney had brought the bright influence of her natural charm into the Hoare family, which was naturally gloomy and morose, but the Buxtons were sunny and charming by nature. Indescribably tender was the relation which existed not only between the sisters, but between their now numerous children, who formed, as it were, one great family. In her journal we find Mrs. Buxton writing :—

"My little flock are a source of great delight to me. My lovely boys are all I could wish. O Lord, make me willing to part from any of these precious treasures, if it be Thy pleasure to deprive me of them. I feel too great a dread of such a trial."

But in the spring of 1820, whilst they were living at Hampstead near their sister Louisa Hoare, this trial came to Mr. and Mrs. Buxton—

came with a bitterness seldom sent—four of their children being taken from them in the short space of five weeks—Thomas Fowell, on March 28; Hannah, April 17; Rachel Gurney, April 27; Louisa, May 1. Amelia Opie, referring to the loss of the four children, wrote to their mother:—

“I remember and see so perfectly every feature and expression of these lost darlings that, were I an artist, I could draw them all four. Little did I think when they amused and interested me so much when I was last at Earlham, that I should never see them again. Dear friend, what a comfort, what a blessed balm in *brotherly* love must you all feel.”

During the sorrows of this time Mrs. Fry had written:—

“*Plasht, April 26, 1820.*—My dearest sister Buxton has been most deeply afflicted in the loss, first, of her eldest boy, little Fowell, about ten years old; then, less than three weeks after him, a little girl nearly two years old, besides dangerous illness of most of her other children. Two more are in a most critical state. Oh, I trust that the Almighty will stay His hand upon them, and that the little lambs who are now ill may be restored.”

“*May 1.*—Since last writing little Rachel Buxton died, about five years of age—a most comely and

delightful child. She appeared even in her illness particularly clothed with all the graces of the Spirit—so mild, so obedient, so affectionate. The giving up this sweet Rachel was peculiarly hard to us, and we all perhaps too much set our hearts on her life.”

“*May 3.*—Since I last wrote, on the evening of the same day, poor little Louisa died also. . . . Her subjected spirit in her illness marked her having been trained to the discipline of the cross. It has been an awful and instructive lesson thus to see what was so beautiful in these darling little girls taken out of our view, and dearest Fowell too, that delightful boy, and all in less than five weeks.”

“*May 5.*—My state on entering the Yearly Meeting was a very low one, though, generally speaking, I find it a time of encouragement. Much good and sweetness appears to exist among us, and I thought altogether that I had rather remarkably the sympathy and unity of the Church. I accompanied dear Mary Dudley into the men’s meeting, which was a very awful service, but best help was very near; and I believe ‘the word in season,’ proved to the peculiar comfort and edification of the meeting, at least so we understood from others. Since Yearly Meeting I have been much driven, much to do, many after me. I think I never have been made so much of in large companies, while, if brought into public on account of benevolent objects, the utmost attention has been paid to me from all in authority—from princes, archbishops, &c., to people of almost every rank, ‘the righteous compassing me



about.' As far, however, as I know my own heart, I never was less disposed to exaltation, having my own deep, inexpressibly deep causes of humiliation."

JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY to HANNAH BUXTON.

"*Earlham, May 2, 1820.*—My tenderly beloved sister, though I feel that I can do nothing to help thee (unless it be to continue watchful in prayer for thee and thine), yet I must again write to say how my heart bleeds with thine and thy dearest husband's. It seems that we must be brought to give up our darling love also.<sup>1</sup> But our sorrow may be a little checked (as I feel mine to be at this moment) by the inquiry 'to whom do we give her up?' The answer is plain. We are not giving her up to the prince of the power of the air, we are not giving her up to darkness and death, or to a grave over which there is no victory. We are giving her up to the Lord Jesus, who bought her with His blood, whose *own* she is, who loves her with even a deeper and sweeter love than ours, and who can alone make her perfectly and everlastingly happy. How comforting it is to think of the union of thy little ones before the throne of glory. Truly may we say 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven.'

"Let us, dearest sister, endeavour under these severe losses to dwell more constantly upon this delightful thought, which is presented to us by no cunningly devised fable, but of which the real existence rests upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,

<sup>1</sup> A child who died the same day.

Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone. When we reflect on our Lord's stupendous miracles, on the fulfilment of prophecies, on the unequivocal evidence of the authenticity and inspiration of Scripture, on the blessed fruits of faith, on the internal power of the religion we profess to cleanse the heart and to bring man into true conformity with his Maker, we must acknowledge that both the outward understanding and the spiritual mind are most satisfactorily convinced that Christianity is true. Now, as certain as it is that Christianity is true, so certain does it appear to me to be that the translated ones are enjoying pleasures unspeakable and eternal at the right hand of God. Ah! my love, if these things be so, art thou not more than willing to suffer all *thy* sorrow for the increase of *their* joy? My most hearty desire is that we may all be brought into this state of little children, which is so acceptable to our Creator, into that simplicity, purity, sweetness, and dependence of spirit which thou hast been permitted to behold so eminently brought forth in thy own dear children as they were ripening for heaven and advancing through their short tribulation into glory. My dearest, deepest love is with thee and Fowell."

In the autumn of 1820 Mr. and Mrs. Buxton, with their four remaining children, left Hampstead, and went to reside at Cromer Hall, near many of their family.

An interesting account remains by an eye-

witness of Mrs. Fry's teaching in Newgate during this year of 1820.<sup>1</sup>

"Mrs. Fry entered the room, and having courteously spoken to those whom she knew, and politely noticed all, a table was placed and a Bible laid upon it; and when she had directed the *first* bell to be rung, she and her friends took their seats, having the visitors behind and around them, and rows of forms in front (rising like an amphitheatre), for the prisoners to sit upon. The first bell was to give notice to the prisoners to get ready. On the second ringing they began to enter, and were directed by the matron of the prison to sit as closely as possible. They came in in a very orderly manner, quietly and respectfully, and took their places with great decorum. All were tidily dressed, in a close and neat manner, their caps clean and well put on, and some of them with an air which showed that they had been accustomed to pay attention to their apparel. When all the prisoners were assembled, their appearance rendered some effort necessary to recollect that these were convicts; but remembrance was aided by the strong iron bars which guarded the windows, and which reminded us that we were in Newgate. The prisoners were of all ages, from eighteen to sixty, and in number about seventy.

"The visitors, and the ladies who generally accompanied Mrs. Fry, were together about forty, and the great majority of them females.

"When the little bustle occasioned by seating and

<sup>1</sup> "An Hour in His Majesty's Gaol of Newgate on Friday the 22nd December 1820."

endeavouring to close still more, to make room for all, had subsided, there succeeded a short, but an almost awful silence. The eyes of the prisoners were fixed on Mrs. Fry. Those of the visitors were fixed on the prisoners, but all seemed waiting in the stillness of anxious expectation. Doubtless the feelings of the visitors were greatly heightened during this silence by the contemplation which the mind could not avoid on seeing a collection of persons convicted of transgressions, condemned by the law, under forcible restraint, and awaiting their further punishment, the sentence pronounced on some of them being *death*, on others banishment from the land of their nativity.

“The silence was at length broken by that mild voice which the prisoners had often heard. Mrs. Fry began to read from the Bible. She had selected the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. While, with distinct articulation, she dwelt upon the more important words, every hearer appeared affected. The convicts showed their interest by their eyes fixed upon the reader, and their anxiety by their heads bent forward to meet the sound. When she had finished the chapters, which she read slowly, she remained for a few seconds perfectly silent, and the silence was as a silence which might be felt.

“She then addressed them. She told them that though the apostle addressed the chapter to his *brethren*, yet in that word their sex (*our* sex, she said) was included. Females were equally besought to present themselves a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, and such sacrifice was a most reasonable service. And, lest the word *sacrifice* might not be

understood by some, the apostle had made it clearly intelligible when he told them in the following verse that this sacrifice so acceptable to God was presented when they were not conformed to this world, but were transformed by the renewing of their minds. When that was the case, humility would prevent any from thinking more highly of themselves than they ought to think, and would teach them to think soberly, according as God had dealt to each their measure of faith. It would show itself in love without dissimulation; in abhorring that which is evil, in cleaving to that which is good; by diligence in the performance of personal duty; by fervour of spirit when serving the Lord; by rejoicing in hope; by patience in tribulation, and by a persevering constancy in prayer. She urged upon those present the Divine precepts—'Bless them who persecute you, bless and curse not. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.'

"She added, with a tone of persuasion which I shall not easily forget—

"'Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine, *I* will repay, saith the Lord. *Therefore* if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Thus shall your kindness melt them from their anger to kindness in return. "Be not overcome therefore of evil, but overcome evil with good."'

"She touched upon the duty as well as advantage of 'every soul being subject unto the higher powers,

which are ordained of God to be ministers of God for good to those who do good, but to execute wrath upon them that do evil.' She showed them the comprehensiveness of the saying, 'Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, and that therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.'

"She reminded them, and included herself in the acknowledgment, that all had partaken of the tender mercies of that God, who, like as a father pitieth his children, pitieth those who fear Him. 'We are all,' said she, 'receiving constantly of His mercy; we have bread to eat, and raiment wherewith we are clothed; nor are spiritual mercies and provisions sparingly dealt out to us; we have line upon line, and precept upon precept, here much, and there much. God's love is over all, for He has so loved the world that He gave His well-beloved Son to die for our sins. Thus there is hope for *all*, even for the greatest offenders, for those who have gone the greatest lengths in iniquity. Through gratitude, therefore, should all present to God the living sacrifice, which is the most reasonable service.'

"In the most plain and affecting manner, she stated how much, during the reading of the latter verses of the last chapter, her own mind had been impressed with the words, 'Knowing the time, that it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.' She again pronounced with striking emphasis—'The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and

drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.'

" 'What a dreadful thing it would be,' she continued, whilst many of her audience were in tears, 'to continue sleeping this sleep of death till roused to agony by the moment of dissolution, the day of judgment!' She reminded them that indeed the awful day was at hand, and urged them even *now* to put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

" At the moment when she ceased her exhortation, the solemnity of the scene became touching beyond any power of description. The visitors, absorbed in reflection on *their* personal interest in these great truths, forgot the circumstances of the convicted; and it may be well believed that the prisoners forgot visitors. It became a silent meeting for some time, only interrupted by sobs.

" Mrs. Fry then read the whole of the thirty-ninth Psalm, and again permitted a little time to elapse that the minds of her hearers might receive the impression which that Psalm is calculated to make respecting the precariousness of life and the true importance of the Divine blessing.

" Mr. Sheriff Williams then addressed the prisoners, and then the women retired in as quiet and orderly a manner as they had entered."

## VIII

### THE REAPERS WERE THE ANGELS

“Jesu, spes poenitentibus,  
Quam pius es petentibus !  
Quam bonus te quaerentibus !  
Sed *quid invenientibus !*”

*Latin Hymn.*

RACHEL GURNEY was much with the Hoares at this time, and attended the Rev. Josiah Pratt's Church of England service, to which her mind became daily more conformed. In the summer of 1820 she was privately baptized in Harrow Church by Mr. John Cunningham ; a step she never regretted. Elizabeth, Mrs. Fry, and Priscilla Gurney were now the only members of the Earlham sisterhood who continued to be “Friends.”

In the spring of 1821, though greatly occupied in a time of strong mercantile excitement, Samuel Gurney found time to watch personally, with Mrs. Fry, over the removal of his fading sister Priscilla to the Buxtons' house of Cromer Hall. To his wife he writes :—

“Thou wilt have heard from Rachel of our safe



arrival here. We had been a little doubtful whether it might not have proved too great an excitement to our dear Priscilla. The contrary proved the case, and I think it rather tended to revive her. As far as the circumstances of the case admitted, Betsy and I had a very pleasant journey.

"Thou wilt have heard that Priscilla has a good deal revived from the very low state in which she was a few days ago, which has enabled her, and us also, to value being together much more than we could have done a short time since. She appears to enjoy our sitting with her quietly, and occasionally reading or entering into conversation among ourselves.

"Notwithstanding the uncommon calmness that pervades her mind, she has many deep baptisms to pass through: not that she has any apprehensions as to the future, but more, I think, as to the close and near ties she has to leave. She told Louisa the other day that the prospect of a return to life was attended with much more conflict than that of death. For myself, I have felt refreshed and have slept well, although having left London at a critical moment has given me some pain; not that I doubt the propriety of my coming under the information I then had; and I must, therefore, leave matters to take care of themselves. Indeed, it sometimes happens they do best by themselves, and work their own way better than we can for them.

"Dear Priscilla continues very calm and peaceful, and much values my company, which is generally of the quiet sort, as she prefers it and it suits her."

Rachel Gurney joined Priscilla at Cromer

Hall, and from that time entirely devoted herself to her suffering sister, of whom Amelia Opie had written, "I hope that warm weather and great care will make this faint bird of paradise tarry amongst us some time longer," while she depicted her in the lines—

"That hazel eye, to whose soft beams was given  
To charm on earth by looks which spoke of heaven ;  
That firm, full lip, with glowing crimson fraught,  
Which shed new beauty on the truths it taught ;  
The auburn hair, which, parted on thy brow,  
Bestowed new whiteness on its lurid snow."

From Cromer Rachel wrote :—

"*Jan. 14, 1821.*—This has been a day of no common value in a visit from dear Joseph. We had a little meeting in Priscilla's room, in which the spirit of prayer was poured forth. Joseph prayed for all of us as a family, going through the different members according to their estate. It was an occasion of deep solemnity in drawing near to God and to each other, and much thanksgiving was mingled with our supplications, especially for the varied mercies bestowed upon dearest Priscilla in the various steps of her pilgrimage, in which her light has been made to shine for the good of others and the glory of God. Joseph prayed that, having been as a family so bountifully dealt with in spiritual and temporal things, we might all be kept *humble* and singly devoted to our Lord. He afterwards spoke to us upon the nature and efficacy of the work

of grace in the soul, and Priscilla concluded these ministrations by a most affecting but encouraging address and exhortation to Fowell, now again entering upon his parliamentary duties. . . . Priscilla said that she had never been more sensible than at this time of the voice which said 'Peace, be still!' To her doctor



OLD CROMER HALL.

on his last visit she said that she had all that life could give in the way of outward blessings, and *much more than life could give.*"

Priscilla's only earthly anxiety had seemed to be that she might live till the return of Richenda

and Francis Cunningham from the Continent. Mrs. Cunningham writes :—

“*Feb.* 20, 1821.—Priscilla wished to see us immediately on our arrival. During our separation of ten months she had been sinking more and more, and I now found her in the last stage of decline, with scarcely a trace of what she was. Yet the precious life was spared to us for six weeks after our return, during which I was able to unite with my sisters in ministering to her comfort.”

Joseph John Gurney writes :—

“(*March* 31.)—Seventh day was indeed a memorable one. Priscilla was evidently herself the whole day, seemed to enter into what was read to her, and received the ministry of her brothers and sisters, especially that of Fowell. The thirteenth of the 1st Corinthians was read, and the enduring nature of true love dwelt upon. She in vain endeavoured to address Fowell, but could not speak. She offered her hand to different individuals repeatedly, in token of love, to me sweetly, amongst the rest. About half-past nine in the evening, we were all summoned into the room, as there were increased appearances of approaching death. Solemn and sweet was the time we then passed together. Prayer and thanksgiving were offered. Our dear sister Fry, wonderfully strengthened in faith and empowered by the Spirit, addressed the dying beloved one in a strain of confidence and assured encouragement, as it were,

helping her over the waters of Jordan.<sup>1</sup> In the course of the opportunity Priscilla clearly smiled, and repeatedly and distinctly pronounced the word 'Farewell.' . . . I sat up with her during the night. It was a night of dying. About nine, we were all again assembled with her, and whilst our sister Fry was in the act of commending her into the hands of her God and Father, one gentle sigh closed the awful yet peaceful scene!"

Mrs. Fry narrates :—

"We were all by her when her prepared spirit left the body, and a sweet time it was. After commending her to the Lord, my brother Joseph quoted these words :—

'One gentle sigh the fetters breaks,  
We scarce can say they're gone  
Before the willing spirit takes  
Its station near the throne.'

"Catherine expressed her firm belief that she was one of the blessed who died in the Lord. Rachel, after a time, uttered a few words in thanksgiving for her, and prayed for us who remain."

A relation present wrote to one of Mrs. Fry's daughters :—

"I never can lose sight of that group, the cluster of sisters, the perfect stillness, the sacred and assured peace—not a sob reached the ear, but exquisite tenderness pervaded the whole. Your mother prayed,

<sup>1</sup> Joseph John Gurney's Journal says :—"Her elevated spirit was indeed teaching and uplifting, to the glory of her God, who alone has made her what she is."

returned thanks to the Saviour, and committed her dying sister, and then the family, fervently and unreservedly into God's keeping."

After Priscilla's death Amelia Opie wrote the lines beginning—

"There is a spot in life's dark scene  
Which oft with willing steps I tread ;  
It is yon still, sequestered green  
Where sleep the nameless, tombless dead.  
There, underneath that elm's soft shade,  
Now waving in the zephyr's breath,  
Beloved Priscilla, thou art laid,  
Within the grassy home of death.  
I would not call thee back again,  
To this dark world, unworthy thee ;  
Faith bids my heart that wish restrain,  
Yet, oh, how vast thy loss to me !"

Formerly, the Quaker graves in the Gildencroft had no tombstones or epitaphs, but a record was preserved in the Meeting-house of the exact spot where each member was buried ; but about twenty years since the family placed tombstones to all the different members of the house of Gurney who lie there—seed sown to immortality from many generations, about sixty in number. Gildencroft is a wide oblong field, with an avenue of limes down the middle, and closely surrounded by the dingy houses and red roofs of the town. The Gurney family

occupy the farther end of the burial-ground, and their tombs, like those erected to their connections the Aggs, Geldarts, and Birkbecks, have no ornaments, and merely their names with dates of birth and death. Outside the wrought-iron gates of the burial-ground is the Meeting-house, a handsome brick building with high roof and large windows, which looks as if it had been transported bodily from Holland.

We find Rachel Gurney writing :—

“*Runcton, March 29, 1821.*—How solemn is the pause that succeeds the last breath of the departed. As I think of our dear Priscilla, I fervently desire to attain a further resignation of her to God, and a more realising faith in her blessed change, mindful of her bright example in life and conduct, and stimulated to follow it, according to the measure of the gift of God.”<sup>1</sup>

CATHERINE GURNEY to HANNAH, MRS. BUXTON.

“*Earlham, May 20, 1821.*—I need scarcely say to thee how much I have felt parting with you all. Your going has been a true pain to me for some time past. My strongest affection and interest has been excited for you all, and the separation is much more than temporary separations usually are to me. I have always thought that *life* separations are more trying in many

<sup>1</sup> A Memoir of Priscilla Gurney by Susannah Corder appeared in 1856.

respects than those of death—the exposure to all pains and sorrows of life aggravating every loss. I cannot say how very truly I sympathise in all thy pains, my dearest Hannah, nor how sorrowful it really makes me to have thee exposed to suffering, of whatever kind it may be. All this passes within me far more than I can express to thee. No affliction ever came quite so near to me as thine, or dwelt so long in my heart. It has cast the most of a damp for me on earthly enjoyment of anything that has ever happened to us.

“In the case of our recent loss (in Priscilla) I feel the *gain* infinitely beyond the privation. Read her whole history; it is impossible to my mind not to be sensible of this—the infinite gain to her, and the loss, comparatively light, to each individual—a loss divided amongst numbers, and not overwhelming in its nature like those in married life.

“My thoughts have followed thee continually, my dearest, and I trust London does not look and feel very oppressive. Let me hear as often as it is comfortable to thee to write. I think our last fortnight, since Tacey’s visit, and during Fowell’s, except from being on the eve of your going, the happiest we have ever had here. It has been a particular comfort to me to feel so happy with Fowell and have a very lively sense of his kindness and great generosity to us. I always say he is one of the very few whose generosity, in all respects, meets our very highest expectations; and his whole character delightfully displays the *progressive* work of religion in his heart.”

On returning to London from her sister’s



death-bed, Mrs. Fry continued to labour unceasingly for the reformation of prisons and the abolition of capital punishment. Of the former she wrote :—

“ I am anxious that a few things which would greatly tend to the order and reformation of these poor women, and protect their little remaining virtue, should become established practices, authorised by Government, and not dependent upon a few individuals, whose life and health, and everything else, are so uncertain.”

On the 23rd of May 1821, Sir James Mackintosh brought forward his motion “ for mitigating the severity of punishment in certain cases of forgery, and the crimes connected therewith.” Sir Samuel Romilly had, with the exception of Lord Nugent and a very few others, stood almost unsupported in the Lower House ; now the contest had become nearly equal, and Sir James Mackintosh’s Bill was lost by a very small majority. It was on this occasion that Mr. Buxton delivered his famous speech upon capital punishment.

Maria Edgeworth describes a visit to Newgate in the following year :—

“ *March* 1822.—Yesterday we went by appointment to Newgate. The private door opened at sight of our

tickets, and the great doors, and the little doors, and the thick doors, and doors of all sorts, were unbolted and unlocked, and on we went through dreary but clean passages, till we came to a room where rows of empty benches fronted a table on which lay a large Bible. Several ladies and gentlemen entered and took their seats at either side of the table, in silence.

"Enter Mrs. Fry in a drab-coloured silk cloak and plain borderless Quaker cap; a most benevolent countenance—Guido-Madonna face—calm, benign. 'I must make an inquiry—Is Maria Edgeworth here? and where?' I went forward; she bade us come and sit beside her. Her first smile as she looked upon me I can never forget.

"The prisoners came in, and in an orderly manner ranged themselves on the benches. All quite clean, faces, hair, caps, and hands. On a very low bench in front little children were seated and were *settled* by their mothers. Almost all these women, about thirty, were under sentence of transportation, some few only were for imprisonment. One who did not appear was under sentence of death. Frequently women when sentenced to death become ill, and unable to attend Mrs. Fry; the others come regularly and voluntarily.

"She opened the Bible, and read in the most sweetly solemn, sedate voice I ever heard, slowly and distinctly, without anything in the manner that could distract attention from the matter. Sometimes she paused to explain, which she did with great judgment, addressing the convicts, '*we* have felt; *we* are convinced.' They

were very attentive, unaffectedly interested, I thought, in all she said, and touched by her manner. There was nothing put on in their countenances, not any appearance of hypocrisy. I studied their countenances carefully, but I could not see any which, without knowing to whom they belonged, I should have decided was bad; yet Mrs. Fry assured me that all these women had been of the worst sort. She confirmed what we have read and heard, that it was by their love of their children that she first obtained influence over these abandoned women. When she first took notice of one or two of their fine children, the mothers said that if she could but save their children from the misery they had gone through in vice, they would do anything she bid them. And when they saw the change made in their children by her schooling, they begged to attend themselves. I could not have conceived that the love of their children could have remained so strong in hearts in which every other feeling of virtue had so long been dead. The Vicar of Wakefield's sermon in prison is, it seems, founded on a deep and true knowledge of human nature—'the spark of good is often smothered, never wholly extinguished.'

"Mrs. Fry often says an extempore prayer; but this day she was quite silent while she covered her face with her hands for some minutes: the women were perfectly silent, with their eyes fixed upon her, and when she said, 'You may go,' they went away *slowly*. The children sat quite still the whole time, and when one *leaned*, the mother behind set her upright.

"Mrs. Fry told us that the dividing the women into classes has been of the greatest advantage, and putting

them under the care of monitors. There is some little pecuniary advantage attached to the office of monitor which makes them emulous to obtain it.

"We went through the female wards with Mrs. Fry, and saw the women at various works—knitting, rug-making, &c. They have done a great deal of needle-work very neatly, and some very ingenious. When I expressed my foolish wonder at this to Mrs. Fry's sister, she replied, 'We have to do, recollect, ma'am, not with fools, but with rogues.'"

ELIZABETH FRY'S *Journal*.

"*Plashet, Dec. 14, 1822.*—I yesterday for the first time since my lying-in went to London and visited Newgate. My greeting there was warm from the prisoners. Friends of the committee and I felt peaceful there, and I think I may say afresh sensible that the work was not ours, that in tender mercy we had first been brought there, and I had to crave a blessing on our labours, and also to acknowledge the tender mercy of our God as our Saviour and Deliverer. But a fear arose, and I think not without ground, that when on my knees, sobbing and tears of those present excited in me the natural part, and diverted me in a measure from the pure gift, so that thus pouring forth my soul in prayer was neither so much to my comfort nor relief as sometimes."

Joseph John Gurney, outwardly engrossed throughout the week by business concerns, had



Elizabeth M. Fry.  
after Lister.



been often absurdly reproached by "Friends" with the "want of unity" existing between this and his ministerial life (of public preaching), to which he had fancied himself "called" in 1818. He had written :—

"(*July 8, 1821.*)—I suppose my leading object in life may be said to be the bank. It sometimes startles me to find my leading object of such a nature, and now and then I doubt whether it is quite consistent with my religious pursuits and duties. I remember, however, that it has been the allotment of Providence; that I was introduced into the business in obedience to my father in early life; that my religious pursuits have found me in this situation, and that hitherto the two things have not proved incompatible. It is, however, a very serious thing to be so largely engaged in the cares and transactions of money matters. It calls for real watchfulness against avarice, against a careful spirit, and against worldliness in various forms. It is much my desire that, should it be the will of my gracious Leader and Commander entirely to divert my attention at any time from this object, that will may be made known to me and some opening for escape given. While I am a banker, the bank must be attended to. It is obviously the religious duty of a trustee to so large an amount to be diligent in watching his trust.

"My 'oversership' in Norwich Meeting; my ministry; both are interesting to me. It is a great comfort, inexpressibly so, that this ministry is not at my

own command; that it comes and goes; that I can neither stop it, nor set it going."

"A Letter to a Friend on the Authority, Purpose, and Effects of Christianity, and especially on the Doctrine of Redemption," was published by Joseph John Gurney, and obtained a wide circulation, several hundred thousand copies being distributed.

In June 1822, his wife, Jane Gurney, died after a very short illness. To the Bishop of Norwich he wrote:—

"(June 10, 1822.)—I have this morning parted with my dearest earthly treasure, and have bid her God speed to the heavenly regions, where Christ dwelleth in His glory. One short week has marred my fond and pleasant pictures. My dearest wife on this day week was attacked by violent pleurisy, and is now numbered with the dead—may I not rather say with the *living*?—with those who, like her, have placed a firm trust in their omnipotent Redeemer, and who have faithfully endeavoured to serve Him—'*Therefore are they before the throne of God.*' It has been to me a time of the deepest anguish and conflict of mind, but at times the storms have all been hushed by that Divine power of which I have indeed experienced the healing virtue, and on which it will, I humbly trust, be my endeavour to wait all my life long."



Jane Gurney<sup>1</sup> was buried in the Gildencroft, where Joseph John had lately laid her two sisters-in-law, his own sister, Priscilla Gurney, and his first cousin, Jane, wife of her brother, Henry Birkbeck.

<sup>1</sup> The fine old copy of Buffon at Earlham, which belonged to Mirabeau, was left by Bartlett Gurney to his cousin Jane Birkbeck, afterwards the first wife of Joseph John Gurney.

END OF VOL. I

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